THE

LABOUR MONTHLY

A MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR

Editor : R. PALME DUTT

Volume 18 March, 1936 Number 3

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

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PROBLEMS OF LABOUR POLICY*

[*At the beginning of this year in view of the many issues arising out of the General Election in relation to the future of Labour policy the* LABOUR MONTHLY *decided to invite Labour M.P.s., Labour Candidates and others active in the Labour Movement to contribute their views with especial reference to last December Notes of the Month by R.P.D. entitled "After the Election," and the article by W. Rust, "The Future of the Labour Party" in the January issue. The following contributions are a further series of the replies to this invitation, previous replies by David Freeman, R. F. St. J. Reade, E. Shearer and Professor G. E. G. Catlin have been published in the February issue* (7*d. post free from* 7 *John Street, W.C.*1.)]

I.

By HAROLD J. LASKI.

THE effective issue that is raised by the discussion in the last numbers of the LABOUR MONTHLY is simply that of the United Front. I take the view that it is morally obligatory upon the Labour Party to enter the discussion with the Communist Party to see whether an adequate common basis of action can be found. At this phase in the history of capitalism, it seems to me irresponsible for a party to take up any attitude which divides the forces, and so impairs the strength, of the working-class movement. It may be that the discussions would result in failure to discover such a common basis. But at least the rank and file in the movement are entitled to a full exploration of the position. At present each is sniping at the other with no other consequence than aid and comfort to the common enemy.

I think myself that the Communist Party has been guilty of grave errors of judgment in policy and of tactics, both in procedure and in manners, which are indefensible. But the danger which confronts the Labour movement in this country is far too serious to permit the errors

* Comrade R.P.D. has unavoidably been prevented from writing this month his usual Notes of the Month. Readers will find an article by Comrade Ben Bradley and himself elsewhere in this issue. They should note also that Comrade R.P.D. will resume his Notes next month and intends to devote them to the issues raised in the above discussion on Problems of Labour Policy not, it should be clearly understood, in any sense of closing the discussion but, *on the contrary*, as a contribution directed towards its *development*.

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of the past to prohibit the exploration of possible united action in the future. I feel this the more keenly at a time when many members of the Labour Party are willing to flirt with Liberalism and so jeopardise the whole purpose for which, as a party, it has fought in the post-war years. I feel this, also, because in my judgment, what the Labour Party above all needs to-day is a clear and coherent philosophy ; and a discussion such as I here suggest is desirable would contribute greatly to that end.

I understand that, in the judgment of the Labour Party Executive, such a decision would be fruitless because, while the Labour Party is committed to "democracy," the Communist Party is committed to "revolution." This seems to me to place the issues on wholly wrong ground. The essential issue of the time is whether the union of capitalism and democracy can be maintained in the epoch of the former's decline. As between the Labour Party and the Communist Party there are, clearly, many differences of opinion upon this question. But within the outer margins of those differences there seem, at least to an academic observer, wide territories that can be fruitfully explored in common. Nothing I have seen in the statements either of the Labour Party or the Trades Union Congress seems to me to traverse this view. It may be that such a discussion as I suggest would reveal it. Until it takes place, and one is in a position to judge, the present division in the ranks seems to me wasteful both in energy and coherence which the Labour Movement can ill afford to spare.

II.

By JOHN LEWIS

(*Late Labour Candidate for Great Yarmouth*).

THE way to unity is for different people to arrive at the same objective truth, not for them to aim at unity as such. Unity in the Labour movement can only come when we agree as to *programme* and *method*. A narrower basis of unity would be a *limited* objective and this is really what the C.P. is after. What is this objective ? The preservation of democratic institutions in the face of fascist attack and a programme of immediate demands of the kind we used to call palliatives. Such a proposal creates a paradoxical situation. The C.P. continues to disbelieve that Parliament can be the instrument by which Socialism can be attained, and it does not propose to unite with the Labour Party for that end. Nor does the C.P. believe in the elaborate and carefully formulated Socialist programme of the Labour Party. It holds this to be doctrinaire and defective. But it submits, not a more socialistic programme, but one that does not even claim to be socialistic, the usual list of reforms : abolish the Means Test, 2s. per shift for the

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miners, work schemes, etc., etc. Now affiliation on two such different programmes is impossible, what is possible is temporary co-operation as long as Labour is prevented from doing more than defend democracy and press for reforms. But obviously, if Labour goes boldly forward for parliamentary socialism the C.P. cannot support it.

When the Labour Party says that it disagrees with the C.P. on the fundamental question of democracy it is disingenuous to obscure the issue by saying that soviet democracy is the only true democracy and that Labour Party officials misrepresent the dictatorship of the proletariat. Both things are true, but even the most stupid and reactionary Labour leader is right if he believes that the fundamental difference is that the Labour man pins his hope in parliament and the communist in revolution as the way the transition to Socialism must be effected.

The communist replies that in spite of this difference, unity on the narrower basis is necessary in order to withstand fascism and reaction. I profoundly disagree. It is a negative and merely defensive position which will not mobilise sufficient forces or give them heart, moreover, it implies the abandonment of our immediate aim of effecting the transition to Socialism by parliament. *It is clear that the C.P. only wants to come in on the grounds that that aim is abandoned and they could not allow themselves to come in otherwise.*

Yet to abandon that aim is to betray both Socialism and democracy and to shatter the hopes of those who support us for our faith in them.

The Labour Party cannot allow affiliation on such terms. All it can do is to lay down the minimum conditions for real unity, which should be :

1. Abandonment of the revolutionary method and acceptance of parliamentary transition to Socialism.
2. Acceptance of the Socialist programme embodied in *For Socialism and Peace.*

I see no reason why the C.P. should not accept these conditions. It may well be that we shall be prevented by force from achieving Socialism by parliamentary means but, even if we are convinced that that is so, that is far from being a reason for giving up the parliamentary struggle. To do so is to skip a whole stage. If revolution is made necessary by unconstitutional action the best way to prepare for it is to work steadily for a parliamentary victory, since nothing is more likely to mobilise a militant democracy than an attempt to thwart a parliamentary mandate.

As far as the official programme is concerned, just because it is over elaborate and doctrinaire, it offers us scope for the formulation of a first-step programme out of its miscellany. We must fasten on proposals which are urgent, have a wide, humane appeal, and which, if carried out, will force us to go on and make retreat impossible. At the same time, they must be such as will rally enthusiastic support from the middle classes as well as from Labour.

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This programme should be based on two fundamental principles:

1. That the provision of a national minimum of food, clothing and shelter is desirable and possible.
2. That it cannot be impossible to set idle men to work on unused resources to make the things they need.

If private enterprise cannot utilise our resources then public enterprise must step in. At the heart of this programme is the question of *control.* Obviously, only a people's government will ever do this. It implies democratic control of the means of life and that is what we ought to fight for.

This was the programme on which I fought the General Election at Yarmouth. We had a united front of radicals, Lloyd Georgites, Labour, I.L.P., N.U.W.M. and C.P. We knocked 10,000 off the National Government majority and more than doubled the Labour vote.

III.

By W. H. BENNETT

(*Late Labour Candidate for Dover*).

WE first need, I think, to define what we expect of a General Election, and more than that to make up our minds as to what our aim is in an election contest. First let us remember an election contest is the periodical using of a piece of machinery devised and used inside a capitalist order of society. I am assuming that we are considering this particular election as *Socialists* as distinct from members (and/or candidates) of the Labour Party, a very different thing. As socialists have we made up our minds what we want to use an election for? Do we wish to capture votes or do we wish to make socialists? On the answer to that everything depends. If we make votes our aim, then we must design all our efforts, speeches, propaganda, etc., etc., to that end. An example of this was to be seen, I think (writing before the result) in the Cromarty election; in that contest the *Daily Herald* very pointedly stated that the candidate (Labour) had no revolutionary socialist ideas. Suppose we do decide to "trim our sails" and go out for votes, and further let us assume we get them, where are we then? Would anyone suggest *any* party could proceed on such a basis to introduce socialist measures? On the other hand, if we ignore votes and use the occasion of a general election to make convinced socialists shall we, in that case ever obtain a parliamentary majority? Here, I feel, is the question troubling the Labour Party. This explains to a great extent, the contradictions arising from time to time in Labour Party policy. Consider the contradictions between the attitude of the *Daily Herald* to the Jubilee and that of *Industrial News* (Press Bulletin of the T.U.C.). Many other instances could be given, *e.g.*, the attitude of Mr. C. R. Attlee

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in *Reynolds's* debate on socialism. " We will not water down our socialism " and that of the *Daily Herald* already quoted in the Cromarty election proceeding at the same time. It may be argued (I think rightly) that this merely represents ideologically, actual economic conditions, and that such things will pass as the economic battle is fought out ; maybe, but I recognise the battle is on, and I would prefer a political party directing the economic battle rather than merely waiting upon its development.

Unless we can build up a solid, disciplined, conscious Socialist Party in this country we shall be overwhelmed by developing economic conditions rather than controlling them. If we fail to control them then the outcome is Fascism controlling us (most probably still under the guise of a " National " Government, as instanced by the disclosure in the Smithfield strike that the Government had a plan already drawn up to meet any emergency). History alone will be able to tell what a tragic mistake was made by millions of voters in this country who were again mis-led into sending back a " National " Government in 1935.

The constituency I contested is mainly agricultural and horticultural with a nucleus of industrial workers (miners). A part of the " Garden of England," with mines right in the centre. Quite an interesting constituency. Let us take the miners first ; they are interesting in themselves, drawn from every coal-field in England, Scotland and Wales ; their experience is as varied as possible. They voted on the 13th in the national ballot for the 2s. and on the 14th in the General Election. There were defections, of course, one would not claim that every miner is politically conscious, but the defections were very few indeed. In spite of tremendous difficulties, brought about by polling stations arranged by a real solid Tory County Council, the miners of this area and their wives developed a pitch of enthusiasm never before seen in Kent. They not only expressed bitterness at their own conditions and a determination to secure improvements, but also a bitterness engendered by an acute knowledge of what they, and friends and relatives they had left, suffered in the depressed areas.

The greatest encouragement to me, however, as candidate, came from the way in which members of the civil service rallied around us, not with votes alone, but in many cases with cars. Certainly they were the finest type of men and women I have met.

Railwaymen to the number of about a thousand with their wives, are resident in the division, and of these I need only quote one of their branch secretaries—he said : " Some railwaymen voted Labour whom we thought it would take ten years to convince." On the other hand I have to place on record that numbers of men on P.A.C. relief voted for the Tory candidate (the millionaire, Astor) and also many middle-aged women, on the grounds that he distributed charity to the children each Christmas.

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Let us not exaggerate the class-consciousness of large sections of our people.

There remains the large agricultural and horticultural vote, and this presents a problem largely of money and time. Small villages separated by miles of narrow, dark lanes, with polling stations miles away from home. Yet the position here is far from hopeless. I went into one old cottage in the smallest village in the division, a one-armed Irish woman with three children and an unemployed husband. Sunday night, tea-time, and on the table a loaf and a tin of condensed milk right in the centre of the "Garden of England." What a hope that woman placed in the Labour Party. She volunteered the statement that "everybody is voting Labour in this village." Only one Tory card was on view in the whole village. Tithe-payers were against the National nominee because of the tithe and therefore were not actively instructing the workers who to vote for, many voting for us. The workers one could sense, they never tell, were sympathetic and many would, perhaps for the first time, vote Labour. The village clergy also, because of the peace issue, one felt were not as usually antagonistic; though of course, the "upper reaches" remained in their hide-bound Toryism.

Briefly then, that was the social strata on which we had to work in a fortnight as best we could. No attempt was made to hide our final socialist objective, though we did not shout socialism every third word. We must confess, looking back, that our propaganda was more destructive criticism of the National Government than constructive socialist policy; with a fortnight only to develop that was, perhaps, unavoidable. To summarise, I felt, as candidate, throughout the division a kind of suppressed fearful hope, a sort of large question being asked. Can the Labour Party alter all we are suffering? Or—will they, as we are being told, bring about another crisis and make us suffer more? This, I feel, was the crucial issue in this southern division and finally 21,000 played for safety.

The conclusions I reach, therefore, are:

(1) That we must develop *real* socialist education as intensely as possible amongst our most promising material. (2) We must apply this education in practice in local work and movements, *i.e.*, the trade union, the political party and the co-operatives, and in all spheres of local government. In the latter, not attempting to "trim our sails to every capitalist wind that blows," but putting forward a definite socialist alternative wherever possible, exposing all the many glaring contradictions of capitalism. (3) Spread out into the surrounding agricultural and horticultural areas, concentrating here on showing mainly the interdependence of the town and country proletariat, and finally, we must develop our contacts amongst the civil service and administrative strata of society. I am convinced the

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latter are, in the main, ripe for a real socialist lead. There is the job. Forward to Socialism, not votes, or—fail and suffer Fascism. In justification of the above I might add our vote increased by 5,000.

IV.

By D. W. FLANAGAN

(*Editor, Rotherhithe Labour News*).

THE unity of the working class has been presented as a matter of simple arithmetic (x millions of affiliated members of the Labour Party plus y thousands of Communists). If that were so we might conceivably agree with the official Labour view that those odd thousands of Communists could safely be left outside the Labour Party.

But unity is not a matter of $x + y$: it is a matter of leadership. To-day it is a matter of leading the workers and such allies as they can find in the struggle against war and fascism.

The Rotherhithe Plan—the "Plan to Beat Baldwin" put forward by the *Rotherhithe Labour News*—grew out of a series of articles on the danger of war and fascism and, especially, the dangerous policy of the Baldwin Government.

At the General Election we urged local people to vote Labour because the National Government policy would lead to war: we declared that Baldwin was the enemy of the whole of the common people. We exposed the real character of the National Government. We said it was a government of financiers, armament kings and big industrialists: in fact, a class, not a National, Government.

Our application of this argument to the local election fight—backed by facts about the local Conservative candidate's class position and outlook—resulted in a great victory for Ben Smith, our candidate.

In our opinion it was largely the lack of so clear a statement of the class nature of the opposing parties that enabled Baldwin to retain so many working-class seats in the Elections. Thus when, after the Elections, "theoreticians" in the Labour Movement called for a watering-down of Labour policy "to win the middle-class vote," we made it clear that what was needed was not less Socialism, but more and more Socialism in Labour's programme.

Our view is that the only alternative to Baldwin is Socialism. The matter of patching-up capitalist society can never be regarded by the people as more than that of an old-fashioned election argument. It is Baldwin's opinion against ours.

The fight for Socialism, however, presents the workers with a real, *factual* choice: Baldwin and capitalism, or Labour and socialism: Baldwin and war, or Labour and peace.

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As to " winning the middle-class vote," that is *part* of the, as yet uncompleted, task of winning over a decisive majority of the working class. It is not a separate job : what is good for the workers is good for the middle class, and we should tell them so.

Next, we find that our arguments had not taken us far enough. We needed a programme of action.

And this is roughly the Rotherhithe plan, which was first published in the *Rotherhithe Labour News* for January, 1936 :

> The Labour Party local organisations throughout the country should initiate a united campaign, as broad and representative as possible, to press for :
>
> Repeal of all anti-working-class and anti-Trade Union legislation.
>
> The granting of the 2s. per shift increase to the miners. (The 1s. already accepted is only an " instalment.")
>
> The end of the Means Test and the Hitler-model labour camps.
>
> Work or maintenance for the unemployed.
>
> A peace pact with the Soviet Union and the French nation.
>
> The end of the Naval treaty with Hitler.
>
> The imposition of oil sanctions against Mussolini now in order to speed the downfall of Fascism.

Copies of the issue containing the article in which the programme was outlined was sent to London local Labour Parties for comment and criticism.

What we sought was a programme that pushed aside mere electioneering argument ; a programme that was an indictment, that carried a description of the workers' true problem : the overthrow or, at least, the thwarting of Baldwin.

We aimed at a mobilisation, not only of those who voted for the Labour Party, but those who actually voted for the National Government.

Our plan was, in fact, a plan to reverse the unrepresentative result of the General Election : a plan to reach the real majority of the people through a People's Front.

We are convinced that were the issues of war and fascism and the class policy of the Government put squarely before the British people, the majority would go against Baldwin : just as the majority of the people killed the Hoare-Laval pact.

But all this needs a new leadership of the people. It requires that the Labour Party drop politeness, that the Labour Party state in plain terms just what the Government is : an organ of the capitalist chiefs.

Just now the Labour Party has a magnificent opportunity to rally all anti-war and anti-fascist elements in the population.

The Cabinet is split over foreign policy. In other words, for the time being there is no unity in the capitalist class itself.

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We are convinced that the majority of our people are in favour of co-operation with the U.S.S.R. and France as opposed to support of Hitler and Mussolini.

Now, then, is the time for the Labour Party to profit by the split in the Conservative ranks to call for a People's Front against the Baldwin policy.

In such a campaign Labour could count on the support of the overwhelming majority of the nation, including millions who voted for the National Government.

Baldwin could be forced to desert Hitler and Mussolini: those in all parties who are in favour of standing behind the Franco-Soviet pact would be irresistibly strengthened.

So much for our programme. But the Rotherhithe Plan was intended to be more than a programme. It was also an attempt to bring London local Labour Parties to see the need for leadership. More, it was an attempt to bring the rank and file of the Labour Party into national politics. For we believe that the local Labour Parties have been relegated to the position of receiving stations for policy on which they have not been consulted. This is responsible to a large degree for the lack of a living mass opposition to Baldwin.

The real Labour Party exists in the localities. It is in them that support for the People's Front will be found. And they are not likely to ask questions about party labels.

In Rotherhithe we accepted gladly and gratefully the aid of the Communists during the General Election. I see no reason why we should refuse co-operation with them now. I feel, in fact, that we have more in common with Communist workers than with some Labour leaders—those leaders who do not, in fact, reject unity with the very people they are supposed to be fighting.

What are we to say of the unity that inspired the condemnation of the Smithfield strike of 10,000 men as "unofficial?" What are we to say of the unity that called off the Miners' Strike because a king had died? What are we to say of a T.U.C. secretary who, having accepted an "honour" from a king, uses his position to attack the U.S.S.R. at a time when the future of the world's workers depends on support for the Soviet peace policy? What are we to say of a Labour newspaper that hails the voice of Sir Samuel Hoare as the "voice of Britain" and prints Baldwin's speech on the late King under the heading: "The Premier Speaks for the Nation?"

The *Labour News* group believes passionately in unity—in leadership and struggle through unity. That is Labour's one hope for the future.

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UNITY IN LANCASHIRE

By WILLIAM RUST

LANCASHIRE cradled British capitalism and was the scene of many historic working-class struggles, but to-day this great industrial area is one of the weakest sectors of the Labour front. The cotton trade unions are not sharing in the general revival of trade unionism, in fact the Weavers' Amalgamation has lost no less than 25,000 members during the last twelve months and a large number of the lesser skilled sections of the cotton operatives are still unorganised. The results of the General Election are a serious warning which cannot be ignored. Most of the cotton towns remain Conservative, only four of the ten Manchester seats went Labour, the Conservatives swept Salford once again and are also predominant in Liverpool.

At this rate of " progress " when will there ever be a majority Labour Government ? When will there ever be a serious drive to improve the living standards of Lancashire's employed and unemployed ? There never will be unless big changes are made in the trade union and labour movement The old policies stand condemned by the practical test of results, and there is a growing recognition that a change has got to be made. Most welcome is the turning away from Mondism now being made—all too slowly—by the cotton trade unions as evidenced by the mass agitation now being conducted by the Weavers' Amalgamation for wage increases and the opposition of the spinning unions to the Spinning Redundancy Bill. We must also record the militant activity of the Lancashire Miners' Union, the demand of the Manchester busmen for higher wages and the recruiting of 2,000 new members by the Amalgamated Engineers' Union in Manchester. These facts and the close co-operation between the Communist Party and the Labour workers during the General Election, the setting up of a number of all-embracing Peace Councils and the wide support accorded to the Drive Out Mosley campaign are unmistakable indications of which way the wind is blowing.

But it is not blowing strong enough ! Only the first steps have been taken towards the new unified labour movement, which must be built up if the working class is to advance. What are the next steps ?

The Communist Party in Lancashire is endeavouring to make a serious contribution to this foremost problem of the labour movement, not merely by urging the establishment of united front committees for special purposes, but above all by showing how the existing organisations (trade unions, Labour Party and co-operatives) can be strengthened along new lines of militancy and unity. To-day, the Communist Party is bending

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all of its efforts to secure (1) The all-round strengthening of the trade unions, the co-ordination of the wages movement and the setting up of a united unemployed organisation ; (2) The carrying on of a daily fight for Peace by the labour organisations and also the election of Peace Councils for this purpose ; (3) The waging of a special campaign against the Mosley Fascist concentration in Lancashire ; (4) The combining of all this work with a vigorous propaganda for militant socialism and opposition to rationalisation panaceas.

These proposals let out the secret of the great affiliation " plot." The affiliation campaign is neither being waged for ulterior motives, nor because the Communist Party is turning pink. The Communist Party is applying for affiliation to the Labour Party because at this historical moment, when the Labour movement is turning towards new policies and methods, the revolutionary section is endeavouring to find the practical ways and means of playing a real part in this turn. The Labour Party Executive answers with an academic discourse on democracy versus dictatorship, but the test of affiliation is not a flight into the abstract but an unprejudiced examination of what the Communist Party is actually proposing in order to bring about working-class unity.

We are putting affiliation to the Labour Party in the forefront to-day because, quite frankly, we regard it as the spearhead of all our proposals for unity. Affiliation would signify the breaking down of the old divisions, the ending of heresy-hunting and the penalising of militants, and the opportunity for free discussion within the Labour movement.

The Labour movement in Lancashire cannot hope to advance unless the decline in cotton trade unionism is stemmed. This is an acute problem which cannot be solved without radical changes. *The old dead unionism must go.* The root of the trouble is the endless division into small unions and the lack of union life. When branch meetings are held only once a quarter with an attendance of 1-10 per cent., it is not surprising to find that the " club " is not regarded as a rallying centre. The job to-day is to fight for a scheme of scientific amalgamation and a system of weekly or fortnightly meetings of branches which should be based on the mills. If this was done and steps taken to bring forward to the leading county positions some of the active men now on the district committees, this would signify the beginning of that new live trade unionism so urgently needed.

Big movements are brewing amongst the textile workers and if these movements are led vigorously and combined with union reorganisation the present starvation conditions will be ameliorated and the basis laid for political unity against the Conservatives and the National Government. It is not generally known that many weavers receive only a £1 to 25s. a week and their average wages are much lower than a miner's. The decision of the Weavers' Amalgamation to demand a 15 per cent. wage

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increase and to conduct a big public agitation is being actively supported by the Communist Party which, however, is also proposing that this campaign should be co-ordinated with the fight against the employers' plan to legalise the destruction of some ten million spindles and with the fight of the ancillary workers (tapers, sizers, etc.) against the employers' demand for a wage reduction.

The opposition of the spinning unions to the spinning scrapping scheme which would mean unemployment for another 2,500 operatives is greatly to be welcomed, but this is a first-class political fight which cannot be left to the cotton unions alone. This fight would indeed be greatly strengthened if the Trades Union Congress and Labour Party were to abandon their cotton rationalisation plans which suspiciously resemble the present Spinning Bill. Tory upholders of the Bill have even derided the Labour Party's opposition on the grounds that it is committed to similar schemes. The Communist Party proposes that the gathering struggle of the textile workers be based on the following programme:

(1) The weavers' legalised wage to be based on the uniform price list and the enforcement of a minimum wage.
(2) Abolition of the more loom system.
(3) Rejection of Spinning Bill; restoration of cuts for spinning operatives and a living wage for piecers.
(4) Elimination of middle-men and Stock Exchange speculation.
(5) Partial or complete abolition of indebtedness to banks.
(6) Close co-operation with Indian textile unions.

The engineering revival occasioned by the growth of the armaments industry and the extension of aircraft works in Manchester puts the problem of the engineering unions right in the forefront. All new factories should be 100 per cent. organised from the outset as part of the drive for the strengthening of all engineering unions. But this cannot be achieved unless the present indifferent attitude to women and youths is completely abandoned. In Metropolitan Vickers only about 1 per cent. of the 3,000 girls are organised, and although there are many functioning shop stewards and an elected works committee recognised by the management, not more than one-third of the workers are organised in trade unions. This great electrical combine should be the basis of engineering trade unionism in Manchester and the drive should start from these.

Apart from the miners who are well organised, the other main group of unions are those catering for the transport workers. Outside of rails there are many grave weaknesses. The inner life of the Dockers' Union in both Liverpool and Salford, whilst not so bad as the textile unions, is nevertheless very poor. In Salford, where union membership is compulsory, the functioning of the Union was gravely undermined by

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the wanton expulsion and consequent dismissal of three active members. A conflict between the Transport and General Workers and the Municipal Workers over the bus and tram workers of Liverpool has left most of these workers unorganised. A much better state of affairs exists, however, in Manchester, where the busmen's fight for higher wages needs to be made into a public issue. The spirit of Havelock Wilson still haunts the Seamen's Union, and the fight in the ports and on the ships to make it function is a long and painful job.

Organisation concerns not only the employed but also the unemployed, of which there are over 400,000 in the North-western Division (Lancashire, Cheshire and Cumberland). Amongst those unemployed masses a new unity drive is vitally necessary as the National Unemployed Workers' Movement is very weak and Unemployed Associations are even weaker. The need of the hour is to secure co-operation between the unemployed organisations in the fight against the means test and for work schemes. An organised onslaught on the slums would provide work for tens of thousands of unemployed. In Manchester alone there are 80,000 slum houses, the replacement of which is an urgent necessity. Sir E. D. Simon proposes a hundred-year plan for the re-housing of Manchester, but it seems that the job could be polished off just a little quicker! The traffic crisis in Manchester and district, an area embracing ten million people, demands for its solution large scale employment in order to construct an underground and to electrify the railways.

The Lancashire area with its maze of industries and its millions of skilled workers should be a great centre of prosperity and human happiness. It has become a monument of slumdom and human suffering because the dead hand of capitalism has stricken its industries and changed 400,000 of its one-time busy workers into "surplus labour." Only working-class rule can bring prosperity to Lancashire, open the idle mills, factories and pits, rebuild the grim towns and restore the hopefulness of youth.

It is because of the urgency of the fight for unity against capitalism that the Communist Party proposes to affiliate to the Labour Party and at the same time urges the militant workers to enter the Communist ranks in order directly and immediately to strengthen this unity fight. The united front does not develop automatically, it is a living movement of struggle against capitalism, and it also meets with the constant opposition of the reactionary labour leaders. Therefore, a necessary condition for the widening of the united front is the further strengthening of the revolutionary party, which is devoting all of its energies to the unification of the Labour movement.

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SOME QUESTIONS OF UNITY IN FRANCE

By MAURICE THOREZ

[*The following are extracts from the opening and concluding speeches of Maurice Thorez, the General Secretary of the French Communist Party, at the Eighth Congress of that Party held at Villeurbanne at the end of January. They have been specially translated for the* LABOUR MONTHLY *from the official reports of the Congress as published in "L'Humanité" on January 24th and 29th.*]

The Fight for Unity

PASSING to the question of the unity of the proletariat and the People's Front, Maurice Thorez in his opening speech first recalled the persistent efforts made by the Communists to establish the revolutionary unity of the proletariat.

"At Tours, in 1920," he said, "the whole Party decided for adherence to the Communist International, by 3,208 votes to 1,022, with 397 abstentions. The minority took the initiative of seceding. Since then, the Communists had multiplied their proposals and appeals, and devoted themselves to making the United Front, as Leon Blum's phrase puts it: 'not only inevitable, but dangerous any longer not to accept it.'"

Comrade Thorez then detailed the sacrifices made by the Party in order to obtain the fighting unity of the proletariat.

He proceeded to quote at length from the closing speech made by our great comrade Dimitrov at the Seventh Congress of the Communist International. In this speech the General Secretary of the Communist International showed that the most important immediate task for the international proletariat was that:

> of consolidating its forces politically and organisationally, of putting an end to the isolation to which it had been reduced by the Social Democratic policy of class-collaboration with the bourgeoisie: of rallying the toilers round the working class in a wide People's Front against the offensive of capital and reaction, against fascism and the threat of war in each individual country and in the international arena (page 4, English Edition).

It was not without legitimate pride that the secretary-general of the Party quoted, and the Congress applauded, the following further words of Dimitrov:

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> It is the great service of the French Communist Party and the French proletariat that by their fighting against fascism in a united proletarian front they helped to prepare the decisions of our Congress, which are of such tremendous importance for the workers of all countries (page 4).

Thorez showed how we ought to carry on our action. The united front should not be limited to a few meetings. It must organise the fight for economic and political demands ; but to be effective it must be solidly organised. The co-ordinating committees for which the Pact provides must be set up everywhere between the local organisations of the Communist and Socialist Parties.

The Secretary of the Party added that, while showing themselves to be champions of working-class unity, the Communists must not at any price, or under any pretext, give up the independent work of their Party, give up the spreading of its views, of its slogans, or give up its own effort to mobilise the workers against the bourgeoisie and against fascism. The Communists could not under any circumstances abandon political criticism of opinions or of standpoints contrary to the Pact and to the interests of the working class.

Thorez made it clear that we should in no way cease from exposing the splitting tactics of the Trotskyist slanderers, or from condemning manœuvres that are anti-communist and contrary to the Pact.

Further, we should not hide from the workers the heavy responsibility of the Socialist International for refusing three times in three years to consider the organisation of an international united front.

" It is indeed regrettable," Thorez pointed out, " that the most reactionary leaders of the Second International should have been able to enforce their refusal of the proposals of the Communist International upon a majority in the Socialist Party, upon a majority which declares itself favourable to the United Front."

One Class, One Union Federation, One Party

The speaker recalled that in December, 1932, he had launched in the name of the Communist Party, the slogan : *One Class, One Union, One Party.*

To those who formerly did not accept the United Front, and who said that unity must first be reconstituted in a single Party, the Communists replied : " Let us make the United Front a fact, without giving up what each of us thinks to be right, but let us unite for the purpose of action for partial demands."

" It is certain," Thorez added, " that in the process of the fight since then the Socialist workers have come nearer to their Communist brothers ; on numerous points the Socialist workers and certain of their most outstanding militant members, will from henceforth share our ideas."

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Thorez retraced the efforts of the Communist Party to open the discussion on the problems of forming a single working-class party. He recalled the Charter of Unity proposals which had been forwarded to the Socialist Party.

"We were inspired," he said "by the two-fold experience of the international proletariat. On the one hand, the unfortunate experiences of the German and Austrian workers, the greater part of whom had remained under the influence of Social Democracy, but to-day are bowed down under the yoke of fascism: on the other hand, the happy experience of the workers of the Soviet Union, who were led by the Bolsheviks to the conquest of power and the building up of Socialism."

"We consider," he added, "that the United Party should proclaim its absolute independence of the bourgeoisie and of the bourgeois political parties. It must admit of no compromise whatsoever with French imperialism, whether it be in peace time or in war time. It must recognise the necessity for the violent overthrow of bourgeois rule and for the setting up of the dictatorship of the proletariat through Soviets. In fact, it must be organised on the model of the great party of Lenin and Stalin."

Maurice Thorez declared himself astonished at the irritable tone adopted by Leon Blum in criticising these proposals after a long silence, and after Comrade Zyromski (Secretary of the Seine Federation) had declared that they "were a great step forward, and that their principles were not in contradiction to those in the socialist statement."

The People's Front

The Secretary of the Party recalled the fact that on October 9, 1934, the representatives of our Party had made the proposal to those from the Socialist Party and also to the co-ordinating committees, "for the Pact to be extended in order to attract new forces and to permit of joint work in the cause of trade union unity." He retraced the difficulties together with the results which nevertheless had been achieved after the repeated appeals, proposals, and entreaties that had been made by the Communist Party.

In the end to oppose the front of reaction and fascism, the People's Front of liberty, work, and peace had been set up. "Nine months later, Comrade Delmas, secretary of the National Union of Teachers, had adopted this great rallying cry of the communists as his own."

The People's Front, he said, still encounters adversaries and obstacles, but the enthusiasm and energy given by the Communist Party has brought about the adherence of the workers and the petty bourgeoisie, who now recognise in the People's Front the instrument of their liberation.

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"The People's Front," Thorez specifically stated, "is not regarded by the Communists as a mere temporary tactic, and still less as an electoral calculation. It is part of their fundamental policy which holds it to be imperative to achieve an alliance extending right from the working class to the middle sections of the population, not only in order to conquer fascism, but to put an end to capitalist exploitation. It is one of the reasons for our patient persistence. We shall continue our efforts in the same spirit." (Prolonged applause.)

The speaker showed the immense possibilities of development which the People's Front possessed among the toiling masses, in view of their present situation.

"The middle sections of the population, and especially the peasants," he added, "have an extremely important historical rôle to play. But this rôle can never be an independent one, for these sections will either fall under the influence of capital or, on the contrary, they will find a way of allying themselves with the working class. In the first case the result will be an increase of the exploitation and oppression of all the toiling masses; in the second case it will mean the end of exploitation and the oppression of the people, and the extension of democracy and of popular liberties." (Applause.)

"Our Party refuses," he said "to consider all the bourgeois parties as a single reactionary mass. That would be too simplified a view of things. Lenin condemned those who became hardened in a line of sterile sectarianism."

The People's Front, on the contrary, he said, knows how to bring together all the forces that labour which are menaced by fascism, and which, although not part of the proletariat, are drawn into its orbit.

One sometimes reads or hears that the People's Front is nothing more than the old *cartel des gauches* (Left Parties' *bloc*) enlarged to include the Communists. This is not the case. That *cartel* consisted of a part of the working class following behind a section of the bourgeoisie. The People's Front is the working class influencing the labouring portions of the middle sections of the population and drawing them into the fight against fascism and against capitalism.

The Government of the People's Front

Finally, in dealing with the question of the government of the People's Front, Thorez said:

"The government of the People's Front will be a government which will stop the Fascist menace by disarming and effectively dissolving the armed bands; a government which will make the rich pay; a government which will rely for support in this two-fold task on the extra-parliamentary activity of the masses and on the committees of the People's Front; in

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conditions of the worsening of the crisis and in the development of mass action, it will be a government which will facilitate every possible development of the action of the working class and of its Party, the Communist Party, a government which will allow for the preparation of the final capture of power by the working class."

Thorez then replied to those who would have us conduct the ordinary politicians' game of ministerial collaboration.

"As long as conditions do not allow us to set up a People's Front Government as we interpret the term, we have decided to support a government of the Left in carrying out a programme in the interests, and according to the will, of the people of France ; but we are no party of the bourgeoisie which has given any undertaking to join a bourgeois government."

No Ordinary Ministerial Collaboration

In his closing speech Maurice Thorez stated that "great tasks have been set us by the reports discussed and then adopted at our Congress. We are out for the strengthening of the unity of the working class, for the strengthening of the People's Front.

"And, in this connection, with the unanimous approval of the Congress, it must be repeated that we have not the slightest intention of managing the affairs of the bourgeoisie, or of descending to the level of any ordinary participation in a ministry.

"We are not, of course, indifferent to the form which the government takes. For example, not only do we make and intend to make a distinction between a government of fascist dictatorship and a government which offers a basis of bourgeois democratic liberties ; but also, as our Congress showed yesterday, we rejoice at the fall of the Laval Government, a government which was, in actual fact, preparing the way for a fascist dictatorship.

"We are interested in what the present government is going to do. That it takes steps against the fascist leagues, that it disarms and dissolves them, *that is our essential demand.*

"Our attitude in the coming period will depend on the decisions and on the acts of the government which has just come into power. But there will be no change in our conception of the government of the People's Front, which, by our fighting alliance between the workers and the peasants of France, between the revolutionaries, the republicans, and the democrats, will be capable, if events make it necessary, of standing up against the assaults of fascism and of preparing the way for a workers' and peasants' government, for the first government of the French Soviet Republic."

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THE ANTI-IMPERIALIST PEOPLE'S FRONT IN INDIA

By R. PALME DUTT and BEN BRADLEY

THE Indian national struggle is to-day at a critical point. British Imperialism has succeeded in imposing its constitution of open subjection in the face of the opposition of the entire Indian nation. The first stage of the struggle against it has met with defeat. For the moment there is confusion in the national camp as to the path forward. At the same time the continuously worsening situation and sharpening struggle of the masses of workers and peasants calls ever more loudly for organisation and leadership.

If we look at the world situation we see that all over the world the anti-imperialist struggle is gathering strength and advancing. In Egypt the united mass struggle is exercising powerful pressure on British Imperialism. In China the popular forces of resistance to partition and for national unity and liberation are gathering around the central core of Soviet China, consisting of at least sixty millions who have already thrown off the imperialist yoke. In Abyssinia the entire people is fighting for their freedom with arms in hand and driving back the foreign invader, and the popular forces in all countries are supporting their struggle. In South America the People's Anti-Imperialist Front is making great advances.

What of the situation in India? Since the abandonment of mass civil disobedience we see a confusion of forces and no powerful united movement of resistance to British Imperialism, which rules with more triumphant reaction than ever. Some voices are raised to advocate co-operation in working the new constitution. Others advocate retreat from the political field to concentrate on village industries or on the removal of caste disabilities. Gandhi has proclaimed his retirement from politics. The National Congress, apart from the electoral field, has given up for the time the attempt to direct the struggle, and even in the electoral field is sharply divided on the future policy, to accept office or not to accept office.

The peasants and workers, suffering under ever heavier economic distress, find themselves without united and centralised leadership in their sporadic struggles. Over the past ten years we have witnessed tremendous strike waves and economic unrest, hundreds of thousands

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of textile workers, railwaymen, jute workers and dockers carrying on insistent strike struggles with heroic determination against wage cuts and worsened conditions. Among the peasantry, the hardest hit section of the population, their inability to meet the demands of the landlord, money lender and collector, results in evictions, strikes and clashes with the armed forces of the government. Alongside this there is terrible mass unemployment seriously affecting not only the workers and peasants, but also the middle class.

How can we transform this situation? How can we unite and mobilise a powerful movement of resistance to British Imperialism and for the needs of the masses? This is the key problem of the Indian situation.

The Indian National Congress will shortly be meeting in Lucknow. The representatives of the main body of the Indian national struggle will have to consider the problems of the path forward. What shall be the programme at the coming elections? What shall be the policy of the national representatives who are elected? What shall be the future line of direction of the national struggle to defeat imperialism? The left wing elements are pressing for a line of irreconcilable struggle against imperialism, for an advance of the programme to reflect the growing influence of socialist ideas, and for the organisation of the workers and peasants as the decisive practical task. The right wing elements are making gestures for unity with the Liberals and other elements outside the Congress, who have abstained from participation in the common struggle and stand for co-operation with imperialism. The discussion will be sharp. The decisions will be of far-reaching significance.

It is at this stage that the present proposals are put forward for the consideration of all who, whether inside or outside the Congress, are concerned for the advance of Indian national liberation.

The First Need—Unity

Every Indian patriot will recognise that the first need for the successful advance of the Indian national struggle, the key need of the present situation, is unity of all the anti-imperialist forces in the common struggle. This is the indispensable condition for the successful fight against the existing and ever-sharpening reaction and oppression.

But what is Unity? Talk of Unity, of the United Front, is to-day on the lips of all. But many different proposals are put forward in its name.

Thus some, as in the recent speeches of Babu Rajendra Prasad, late President of Congress, urge unity with moderate or right wing elements at present outside the Congress, such as the Liberals, the friends and allies of the British rulers, whose programme is one of co-operation with imperialism and entry into office in order to assist the slave constitution

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to function successfully. Naturally, the Liberals from their point of view, as shown in the recent speech of V. S. Srinivasa Sastri at Madras, heartily welcome such proposals of unity, provided they may maintain their programme of service to imperialism since they have no mass following themselves and only so may hope to win a basis to enter office and carry out their programme.

But will this strengthen the anti-imperialist forces? While it is evident that all elements, including from among the Liberals, who are prepared to break with co-operation with imperialism and accept the programme of the national struggle, are welcome to the common front, this can only be on condition of acceptance of irreconcilable struggle against imperialism for complete independence (as already laid down in the Congress programme by the Lahore decisions). It is obvious that a so-called " unity " with the friends of the British, achieved by surrendering the struggle against imperialism, could only weaken the united front against imperialism and not strengthen it.

The Anti-Imperialist People's Front

From this it follows that Unity cannot be regarded as something abstract, but can only be unity on the basis of the anti-imperialist struggle.

Much as we may desire to see unity of the whole Indian people in the struggle against foreign rule, we have to recognise that there cannot be an abstract " unity " of the entire Indian population, 100 per cent. all sections and classes, against British Imperialism. Some sections have their interest bound up with imperialism, *e.g.*, the princes, landlords, moneylenders, reactionary religious and political elements which live on exploiting communal differences, elements among the merchants and wealthy classes who favour co-operation with imperialism, etc. The cunning British rulers have known how to follow the old maxim " Divide and rule " and build up their dominion on elements of support within the population; and in consequence, in estimating the forces of the national struggle, we have to take into account the realities of the class-structure of the population under the conditions of imperialism.

But there can be unity of the overwhelming majority of the population against imperialism, *i.e.*, of all the popular masses who suffer under imperialist rule, and of all the elements from other classes who are prepared to join in the common struggle for national liberation.

What is the necessary basis for such unity of all the anti-imperialist forces, such as can unite all the forces of the National Congress, the trade unions, the peasants' organisations, the youth organisations, etc., on a common platform in a mighty common front?

It is clear that the essential minimum basis for such a grouping is (1) a line of consistent struggle against imperialism, and against the

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existing slave constitution, for the complete independence of India ; (2) active struggle for the vital needs of the toiling masses.

This is the unity of the Indian people we want, the United Anti-Imperialist People's Front for the struggle against imperialism.

The Rôle of the National Congress in Realising Unity

At this point the question will be asked : what is the relation of the National Congress to the Anti-Imperialist People's Front ? Is not the National Congress, as many of its leaders claim, already the united front of the Indian people in the national struggle ?

The National Congress has undoubtedly achieved a gigantic task in uniting wide forces of the Indian people for the national struggle, and remains to-day the principal existing mass organisation of many divers elements seeking national liberation. Nothing should be allowed to weaken the degree of unity that has been achieved through the National Congress, and the proposals that are here put forward are only intended to endeavour to find means to assist and extend that unity to a still wider front.

We on the left have many times criticised sharply the existing leadership and tactics of the National Congress. We have found many decisions and policies, such as the calling-off of mass civil disobedience in 1922, at the moment when it was ready to enter on its greatest strength, the uncertain voice on the aim of independence, the wavering in the relations to imperialism, the siding with the landlords against the peasants, the Delhi Pact, the co-operation in the Round Table Conference, the Poona calling-off of the struggle in 1934, disastrous to the true interests of the national struggle and equivalent to surrender to imperialism. We have traced these decisions and policies to the existing dominant bourgeois leadership, whose interests often conflict with the interests of the masses and with the interests of the national struggle. These issues, of the utmost importance for the future, need to be discussed and fought out. But this criticism against particular policies is in no sense intended as a criticism against the masses in the Congress. Our opposition to a particular leadership or to particular policies is only intended to assist the mass army of the national struggle represented by the Congress and to assist and strengthen the national struggle.

The National Congress can play a great part and a foremost part in the work of realising the Anti-Imperialist People's Front. It is even possible that the National Congress by the further transformation of its organisation and programme, may become the form of realisation of the Anti-Imperialist People's Front ; for it is the reality that matters, not the name.

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But it is necessary to recognise that the National Congress, as it exists at present, is not yet the united front of the Indian people in the national struggle. Its constitution still leaves out the broadest sections of the masses. Its programme does not yet express with full clearness the programme of the national struggle. Its leadership cannot yet be recognised as the leadership of the national struggle. It does not at present draw out and guide mass activity, but rather acts as a brake upon it.

What is needed, without impairing the degree of unity that has been achieved through the National Congress, is to strengthen and extend this unity to a broader front and to develop to a new stage the organisation and leadership of the mass struggle against imperialism.

Draw in the Masses

The National Congress is at present based, not on the union of all elements supporting the national struggle, but on a restrictive individual membership, with certain limitations of franchise and of a special ideology or " creed," which prevents it from embracing the broadest front of all who support the national struggle.

The mass organisations of the workers and peasants, the trade unions and peasants' unions and all similar collective mass organisations, constituting the most important forces of the national struggle are at present outside the National Congress. Only when all these forces are combined, the mass organisations of the workers and peasants together with the National Congress, whether in a united front agreement or by the collective affiliation of these organisations to the Congress, will we have achieved a broad united national front capable of developing as a real Anti-Imperialist People's Front and drawing behind it the overwhelming majority of the population, the workers, the peasants and the middle classes in a single army of the national struggle. Within such a *bloc* the working class can increasingly realise its rôle of vanguard, to lead to victory the Indian revolution.

The first aim should therefore be to establish a united front of the National Congress with all the existing mass organisations of the trade unions, peasants' unions, youth associations or other anti-imperialist mass organisations, in a broad Anti-Imperialist People's Front on the basis of the struggle against imperialism and its constitution and for organising the struggle of the masses for their immediate demands.

At the same time we should seek to amend the constitution of the National Congress in such a way as to permit of the collective affiliation with delegate representation, of the trade unions, peasants' unions, youth organisations, etc. This collective affiliation should be carried out not only on an All-India scale (All-India Trades Union Congress to the National Congress), but equally in the provinces and on a district and

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local scale the whole way through, thus bringing the National Congress into direct and continuous association with the masses. This collective affiliation is important, not only for the immediately existing mass organisations, but for the whole network of trade unions and peasants' unions gradually embracing wider and wider sections of the masses, which Congress should devote its most active efforts to assist in building up as the strongest pillars of the national struggle.

The possibility of such collective affiliation is illustrated, not only by the examples of the European Labour Parties, but still more closely by the example of the old national-revolutionary Kuomintang (before the betrayal by Chiang Kai Shek) at the height of its strength when it grouped, along with individual political members, trade unions, peasants' organisations and the Communist Party, and on this basis swept forward from strength to strength, proving the most powerful and victorious weapon up to then devised for the colonial struggle against imperialism.

While it may take a necessary process of time to carry through the campaign and introduce collective affiliation into the constitution of the Congress, no time should be lost in already setting up on a local, district, provincial, and if possible All-India scale, joint bodies of the Congress Committees, Trade Unions, peasant unions, youth associations, Congress Socialist groups and other groups and anti-imperialist organisations, uniting for the purposes of combining the campaign against imperialism in the Anti-Imperialist People's Front.

Actually united front bodies have been already set up in localities—not permanent but temporary bodies, which show the possibilities—in places like Bombay, Calcutta and elsewhere. United front demonstrations and meetings were held in Bombay in February last year against the new slave constitution ; these and similar actions were supported by Trade Unionists, Congress Socialists, Congress-men, Communists, etc. These actions of course were only the very first signs, but they show the urge for, and possibilities of, the Anti-Imperialist People's Front.

Democratise the Constitution of the Congress

In order that the Congress shall really become based on the masses, it is not sufficient merely in a formal fashion to draw the mass organisations into its structure ; it is necessary to elicit the initiative and responsibility of the masses in the direction and policy of the Congress, so that the policy shall really become governed from below.

The existing working of the Congress machinery cannot be regarded as democratic. In practice a very small handful of leaders hold absolute control. In particular, the Working Committee, which has the greatest power and takes the most important executive decisions, is not an elected body, and cannot be regarded as representative of the sections of opinion

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in the rank and file of the Congress. Similarly, in the provinces and localities the degree of control from below is very weak.

An exhaustive overhauling of the constitution is necessary in order to bring it into accord with modern democratic conceptions of a popular party, and to ensure, not only the forms of democracy, but that these shall be realised in the practical working—*i.e.*, widening of facilities for raising issues and putting forward resolutions from the membership, prior circulation of agenda with opportunities for discussion, mandating of delegates, etc., active political life and discussion in all the local organisations, electing from below of all committees and officers, etc.

Centralised direction is essential for the purposes of the struggle, but this centralised direction must be on the principles, not of personal dictatorship, but of democratic centralism, *i.e.*, elected from below and responsible to the representatives of the lower organs.

A Clear Programme of Anti-Imperialist Struggle

Then again much requires to be done to establish and ensure universal acceptance of a clear and unambiguous programme of anti-imperialist struggle both in the National Congress and for the whole Anti-Imperialist People's Front.

At present, despite the decisions of the Lahore Congress on the aim of independence, there is still much confusion even on the central aim. Definitions of the meaning of "Purna Swaraj" are as thick as blackberries on a bush, and cover the most contradictory notions. The latest definition by the Wardha meeting of the Working Committee in September, 1934 ("includes unfettered control over the army and other defence forces, external affairs, fiscal and commercial matters, and financial and economic policy") goes back on the goal of independence and returns to the pre-Lahore aim of Dominion Status.

It is essential to establish in unmistakable terms the aim of complete independence of India as the unchangeable aim of the Indian national struggle, and therewith the rejection of all compromise and negotiation with imperialism for half measures, co-operation in working the constitution, etc.

Further, it is essential to link up the programme of the fight for independence with the immediate political demands of the struggle against imperialism and with the immediate demands of the workers and peasants for their vital needs.

The details of such a programme could be worked out in common by representatives of all the organisations concerned. Thus for example, such a programme might include:

(1) The aim of complete independence for India.

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(2) Freedom of speech, press, organisation, assembly, strikes and picketing.

(3) Repeal of all exceptional and repressive laws, ordinances and anti-labour laws (Criminal Amendment Act, Press Act, etc.).

(4) Release of all political prisoners, detenus and internees.

(5) Against reductions of wages and dismissals of workers ; for an adequate minimum wage and 8-hour day ; for 50 per cent. reduction in rents and against the seizure of peasant land for debt by imperialists, native princes, zemindars and moneylenders.

The particular immediate demands of the struggle could be worked out and varied according to the locality and the particular conditions and stage.

A central rallying slogan for the whole movement could be provided by the demand for a Constituent Assembly ; the conditions under which this demand could be usefully taken up and made the centre of agitation and propaganda are considered later in the present article. A platform of this type requires to be established as the common platform of the Anti-Imperialist People's Front.

Similarly, the constitution and platform of the Congress requires to be worked out anew in the light of this, laying down in simple and clear form the aim of complete independence, the line of irreconcilable struggle against imperialism and the fight for the needs of the workers and peasants. Such a platform can unite all sincere elements of the national struggle, while excluding only those elements which seek to co-operate with imperialism.

The Tactics of Mass Struggle

A similar clearing is necessary with regard to the basic tactics of the Congress and of the national struggle.

The existing ideology of " non-violence," which is still made a compulsory part of the Congress creed, is to-day a survival which is more and more visibly at variance with the realities of the struggle and less and less corresponds to the outlook of large sections of the national movement. Many prominent members of the Congress, who have formally to subscribe to this dogma as the condition of their participation in its mass activities, to-day privately declare their disbelief in it. This is not a healthy situation. While many sections may still be under the influence of the theories of " non-violence," to make this a dogma compulsory on all sections is to place an obstacle in the way of the unity of the national front. In fact the experience of the nearly two decades since the war has abundantly shown that the conception of " non-violence " has been used, not merely in opposition to the fruitless policies of individual

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terrorism or sporadic outbreaks of a minority, but to shackle and hold in all effective mass activity and the development along the lines of the class struggle of the most powerful weapons against imperialism or mass resistence to imperialist violence, and thus leaving free play for the violence of imperialism, has been a dangerous and paralysing influence on the advance of the national struggle and the principal cause of the relative stagnation and failure of advance in India, despite the enormous sacrifices made, compared with other colonial countries. China and Abyssinia have shown how a people fights for its freedom against the imperialist enemy. In Egypt to-day, the higher degree of aggressive mass activity is reflected in the far greater readiness of British Imperialism to offer concessions. It is essential that the Indian national movement should free itself from the paralysing conceptions of passive "non-violence" if it is to defeat its enemy. A sharp, ideological struggle needs to be conducted on this question, but a struggle in the ideological field by way of ceaseless explaining and winning over. This issue should not be allowed to split the national front.

The Congress creed in consequence needs revision in accordance with the real conditions of the struggle. The dogma of "non-violence" should be omitted. The entire emphasis should be placed on the development of the mass struggle, on the work of organisation of the workers and peasants as the primary task in the field of organisation, on the active taking up of the immediate demands of the workers and peasants for their vital needs, and the linking of this struggle with the political anti-imperialist struggle.

Consolidation of the Left Wing

In order to realise the Anti-Imperialist People's Front and to carry through these urgently necessary changes in the constitution, organisation, policy and work of the National Congress, it is essential that all left wing elements in the Congress should fight in unison on a common platform for these vital needs.

In the past there has been much dispersion of effort, division and mutual sniping between the left wing forces, thus playing into the hands of the domination of the right wing leadership. While it is necessary and desirable that the differences of political outlook and conception which exist between the different groupings should be thoroughly discussed and cleared in comradely discussion, this should not stand in the way of the fullest co-operation and common working on all the issues on which agreement can be reached, both within the Congress and in the immediate daily struggle.

Congress Socialists, Trade Unionists, Communists and Left Congressmen should all be able to unite on the essentials of a minimum

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programme of anti-imperialist struggle for complete independence of organisation of the masses and development of mass struggle, and of the fight for changes in the Congress constitution, policy, organisation and leadership to forward these aims. The Congress Socialist Party can play an especially important part in this as the grouping of all the radical elements in the existing Congress. It is of the greatest importance that every effort should be made to clarify questions of programme and tactics in the Congress Socialist Party.

It is in this way that the first stage of the Anti-Imperialist People's Front could be built up already in the common fight, stressing particularly the local, district and provincial basis.

At the same time it is essential to recognise that the task of consolidation of the left wing forces renders more necessary and responsible than ever the rôle and the activity of the Communists in this process, since they have the most responsible rôle to play in ensuring the political clearness of the fight, in pressing forward the drive to unity in action, and guiding the aims of the movement towards the goal of political and social liberation.

Through the consolidation of the left wing forces the first stage of the Anti-Imperialist People's Front can be built up already in the common fight, particular stress being laid in the early stages upon its development on a local and district basis.

The Anti-Imperialist Front in the Elections

The question of the elections is of cardinal importance for the anti-imperialist front.

On the one hand, it is essential that the clear line of the anti-imperialist front, the line of consistent struggle for complete independence, against all co-operation with imperialism and its constitution, and for the demands of the masses, should be challengingly voiced at the elections, and that the outlook of these vast sections of the national movement must not be stifled.

On the other hand, it is essential that unity of the national front should be maintained against the imperialists and their allies, and there should be no splitting of the vote for the benefit of the reactionary right wing elements outside the Congress who stand for co-operation with imperialism.

The best means to realise this requires the most earnest consideration of all supporters of the national struggle.

We would suggest that the anti-imperialist *bloc*, constituted on its programme of complete independence, no co-operation with imperialism, and active struggle for the demands of the masses, should seek agreement with the exisiting leadership of the Congress (within which the Congress

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Socialists, grouping the radical elements, represent already a substantial minority of roughly one-third of the forces and a potential majority), to run its candidates directly on this programme in a certain number of seats (or to be able to include them as a group with their specific programme within the Congress panel), as recognised candidates of the united national front, co-operating with the Congress candidates in other constituencies who run on the official programme. The details of this arrangement will need careful working out ; but with goodwill on both sides, such an arrangement should be possible.

Every effort requires to be made to prevent a splitting of the national front in the elections ; but such unity should not be utilised to stifle the left wing forces of the anti-imperialist *bloc*.

The Constituent Assembly as the Central Slogan of the Struggle

In order to concentrate the struggle against the slave constitution imposed by the British Government, we cannot rest satisfied with the negative programme of rejection of the constitution and refusal of co-operation, but must counterpose our positive slogan.

Corresponding to the existing stages of the movement, the time is now undoubtedly favourable to launch as our central slogan the demand for the convening of a Constituent Assembly based upon a universal and equal franchise and direct and secret ballot. In the past there has been much discussion on the slogan of a Constituent Assembly. On the one hand, it has been presented in such a form as if the existing National Congress were to be regarded as already the Constituent Assembly of the Indian people. On the other hand, it has been presented as if it were to be regarded as an alternative to the aim of Soviets, as the political aim of the Indian Revolution. Both these outlooks are incorrect and require to be combated. But this necessary criticism of misleading conceptions has given rise to the alternative danger of the conception that the slogan of a Constituent Assembly is as such and at all times inadmissible and in inevitable opposition to the aim of Soviets. This would be a serious misunderstanding ; the example of the Bolsheviks in the Russian Revolution has shown how, in a given situation, the slogan of a Constituent Assembly can be a most powerful mobilising force which can be combined with the propaganda of Soviet Power as the ultimate aim.

Is the situation now in India such that this slogan of a Constituent Assembly would be a correct slogan of action for the coming stage ? Yes. At a time when the British Government is imposing its new constitution of slavery upon the Indian nation, and preparing its mockery of elections from which the voice of nine-tenths of the people is excluded, and the remainder barred from effective representation with any power

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to their representatives it is essential to spread broadcast, in opposition to the line of imperialism, the demand for a Constituent Assembly freely elected upon a basis of universal suffrage. In putting this forward the Communists will in no wise weaken their propaganda for the aim of Soviet Power. The Constituent Assembly is a slogan for mobilising the masses at the present stage of the struggle.

But at the same time it is necessary to explain on every occasion on which the issue of a Constituent Assembly is raised, both within the National Congress, and in mass propaganda, that a real Constituent Assembly can only be realised as a result of a broad movement of the masses of the people in active struggle. The significance of the slogan of a Constituent Assembly is as a mobilising slogan of the mass struggle at the present stage. As such it should become the central slogan of action of the present stage of the national struggle and of the Anti-Imperialist People's Front, uniting all the partial and immediate struggles in this central political fight.

* * * *

The need for the speedy realisation of the broadest Anti-Imperialist People's Front in India is the more urgent, not only for the reasons of the situation now existing within India, but in view of the whole international situation as it is developing and affecting India. The war question is now of burning urgency. The Italian war on Abyssinia, alongside the ever-extending Japanese aggression in China, is the signal of the advance of imperialism to a new world war. The sympathies of the Indian people are warmly united with the Abyssinian people in their resistance to the Italian war of aggression, and with the Chinese national struggle against Japanese, and all other, imperialists. But at the same time it is necessary to sharpen the struggle against the war preparations of British Imperialism, which fall with merciless heaviness on the Indian masses. The imminence of a new world war makes more than ever necessary the unity and readiness of the national front in India.

In conclusion, it should be stated that these proposals are put forward for the consideration of all supporters of the struggle for national liberation in India as an attempt to trace the main outline of the path of advance in the present immediate situation and with the given relations of forces. The realisation of this next stage of advance, the realisation of a broad-based, all-embracing and powerful Anti-Imperialist People's Front, should rapidly open the way to new perspectives for the Indian national movement.

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THE PROBLEM OF AFRICAN INDEPENDENCE

An Answer to a Reader's Criticism

By H. RATHBONE

[*The following letter has been received from Geoffrey Gorer, the author of "Africa Dances," in criticism of a review of his book which appeared in the* LABOUR MONTHLY *of November last year. He writes :*

Sir,

In his account of my book, "Africa Dances," your reviewer accuses me of believing that "bad colonial conditions result from the low wages of the administrators . . . . and similar defects," and of stating that "a better government would suffice to make life for the inhabitants of colonial countries all right." I have neither thought nor said anything of the kind. The political portions of my book are almost entirely descriptive. I found, as I think any traveller would, that the Negroes in the Gold Coast had a higher standard of living and relatively greater freedom than their neighbours in the French colonies, and I tried to account for this by the historical reasons of the earlier colonisation of the Gold Coast, when the colonisers renounced the possession of land which was too lethal for them to live on, and the continued policy of indirect taxation, which necessitates a relatively high standard of living in the taxpayers. I never suggested any solution of the problem of colonial peoples for the very good reason that I have never found one which seems to me practical and desirable. Your reviewer apparently has however for he writes "their independence is the primary condition for the improvement of conditions there."

In so far as this is not merely a pious hope it seems to me to be untrue, standing without qualifications. Within the memory of living men Dahomey and large portions of the Ivory Coast had their independence. Dahomey was an absolute monarchy, with a ruling class who lived by war, raiding and the slave trade : the greater part of the population of the country and the neighbouring tribes were in a state of abysmal poverty and fear. In the Ivory Coast tiny tribes with no common language eked out a miserable existence in a country and climate which they had no machinery for dealing with. If the colonisers of these countries were removed to-morrow, and if no other imperialist power grabbed them, Dahomey would certainly revert to its earlier historic position, for members of the ex-royal family are still

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alive : the tribes of the Ivory Coast on the other hand have been so demoralised that almost certainly anarchy would be quickly followed by extinction. The more "civilised" Negroes on the Coast are so corrupted by white bourgeois mission ideology that they would certainly exploit their poorer compatriots just as harshly as the colonisers do.

I do not mean by these arguments to support imperialism in any way, though I think it may be a historically necessary phase if the inhabitants of tropical and sub-tropical countries are to have a new and higher standard of living : what I wish to point out is that independence, by itself, is no solution. The situation in Africa is made extraordinarily complicated by the fact that the great majority of Negroes have no feeling of racial (as opposed to tribal) solidarity, and no common language. Until they acquire these attributes independence will surely merely be a mockery. It is theoretically arguable that Africans would have been better off if Europeans had never set foot in their continent : but such an argument is a complete waste of time. What has to be considered is the actual condition of Africa, and how its inhabitants can gain freedom from exploitation and a reasonable standard of living. If the LABOUR MONTHLY *could produce a practical policy—and not merely pious generalisations—it could perform a most useful service by illuminating one of the most complicated problems of the present day.*

I am, Yours etc.

• • •

The problems raised here are of very much wider interest than would be contained in the immediate question of a reply to this letter. The LABOUR MONTHLY *therefore prints the following article to deal with these problems.*]

THE central question raised by our correspondent is whether the policy of full independence is a practical policy for the peoples of the African colonies, whether in the words of the review "their independence is a primary condition for the improvement of conditions there."

In order to answer this question it is necessary to see in what imperialism consists, what are its essential characteristics, whether it is possible under it permanently to effect any alleviation in the present conditions of exploitation and extreme oppression which exist in the colonies or whether these are in reality the very essence of imperialism.

Is Extreme Colonial Exploitation the Very Essence of Imperialism?

One of the main characteristics of the imperialist stage of capitalism, the monopoly stage as opposed to the previous stage of free competition, is not only the rule of monopolies but the fact that the export of capital becomes the most typical feature instead of the export of goods as in the period of free competition. In the principal home or metropolitan countries huge aggregates of capital had accumulated. This could be called

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surplus capital in the sense that capitalism was of its very nature unable to use it at home, for instance by raising the standard of living of the workers or filling in the gap between the low development of agriculture and the relatively advanced state of industry. For otherwise, as Lenin pointed out in chapter iv of his work on Imperialism, capitalism would not be capitalism ; for the wretched conditions of the masses and the unequal development of economy are the fundamental conditions for the existence of this mode of production.

Consequently, this surplus of capital is exported to countries whose economy is relatively backward, where, in consequence of the fact that raw materials are cheap and wages are lower, capital can earn a higher rate of profit than in the home countries. Capital, therefore, in the popular jargon seeks in these colonies " fields of profitable investment." For just because of the backward nature of economy in these countries the current money equivalent of the value of labour power, *i.e.*, the labour time necessary to maintain and reproduce labour power, is ever so much less than in imperialist countries. Consequently, a rate above the normal profit, a super profit, is made not only out of the direct exploitation of the labour power of these peoples in these colonies, but also out of the export of goods, a great many more goods mainly raw materials being possible to import into the imperialist countries and exchange for a given quantity of manufactured goods exported than if these manufactured goods were exported to a fully developed capitalist country.

On the basis of this system of imperialism these super-profits have become an indispensable asset to the home capitalist, not only to facilitate the keeping of the workers in subjection at home by granting them small reforms and concessions, but also by helping to swell the special bodies of armed men, as Lenin called them, the army, navy and police force, etc., which are necessary to keep the working class at home and in the Empire under the heel of capitalism by forcible means, and also to extend that Empire.

Already therefore we see that in a very actual sense Marx's repeated statement that no workers of one nation who oppress another can themselves be free, has very real economic significance quite apart from the political conclusions to be drawn from it.

This situation has of course been intensified by the whole general crisis of capitalism and by the post-war economic crises. Super-profit is more vitally necessary than ever before to maintain the capitalist system of Britain. What is more, as capitalism always exploits most those sections of the oppressed who are least organised and least advanced, capitalism has tended to throw the burden of its crisis more particularly on the colonial peoples. In addition, while the crisis, being one of over-production particularly of raw materials, has had the effect of menacing the normally high super-profits which capitalism used to make out of the

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exploitation of the colonies, this has only led it all the more to try and compensate itself by intensifying colonial exploitation.

This gives some explanation for the facts which we will cite below with regard to several of the African colonies, showing that the whole apparatus of colonial oppression has been enormously intensified in the last few years.

Consequently, if we examine the contention that reforms in the colonies are possible without directly menacing colonial exploitation, we find that every economic development particularly in these countries is leading exactly in the opposite direction. Any fight on a programme of immediate demands therefore of an economic *or* political nature will be the more bitterly resisted by imperialism and will even more openly, than in a similar struggle in the home country, reveal the real nature of imperialist exploitation and the dictatorship by which it maintains itself.

Nevertheless there are more opportunities to-day than ever before for just such a fight on immediate demands. There are an increasing number drawn from almost all sections in Britain to-day, as is more fully explained in the concluding portions of this article, who, while not prepared to stand out for the complete independence of the colonies, nevertheless will be found to be prepared to give their support to, if not actively co-operate in, the struggle of the colonial peoples for the elementary right of freedom of meeting, organisation and the press, as well as for certain economic issues. The ignominious defeat of the Hoare-Laval robber proposals together with the wide support given to Abyssinia's fight for independence with all its repercussions has shown this clearly enough. The very essence of imperialism which has already been characterised and the consequent fierce resistance that will be put up to even such limited demands will in itself advance the struggle to a higher stage as well as lead to much closer relations and understanding between the colonial peoples and the mass of the people here in imperialist Britain.

The Origin of the Backward Africa Theory

Now, having shown that the extreme forms of oppression characteristic of colonial conditions are of the very essence of imperialism, let us discuss in general what is behind the argument brought up by Geoffrey Gorer in his contention that independence is no practical solution at any rate for the African people. Behind this argument is a complete underestimation of the capabilities of the African peoples—of their capabilities for revolutionary struggle and all that that implies. The imperialists, for their own purposes, have long tried to perpetuate the theory that there were people who were biologically, etc., inferior to others, were incapable of development and therefore of necessity required to be ruled by other peoples. This theory stage by stage has come to be broken

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down. When brought up against the facts of the history of the Eastern peoples, it was soon shown to have no validity at all as regards these peoples, many of whom had civilisations much older than those who would impose their rule on them. Then for many years it was seriously put forward as valid for those of Negro blood. Scientifically, this theory in turn was exposed as completely false several years before the war, but in spite of such an exposure it was, and is still, maintained by a very great number of imperialists and their hangers-on. For practical politics, however, the previous simple justification for imperialist rule over the African peoples as being scientifically necessary for ever has been modified so that, as the Mandates Article (22) of the League of Nations Covenant reads, these peoples are now characterised as " not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world " and therefore, in the name of what is called a " sacred trust of civilisation . . . . the tutelage of such peoples should be entrusted to advanced nations." While it was further laid down that such tutelage should be " temporary," no sort of guidance as to the conditions which must exist before terminating this tutelage was of course indicated.

On this basis, which provides full justification for the imperialists to impose their rule on the African peoples, no opportunity has been given them to develop. What is more, of necessity, as the general crisis of capitalism intensifies, attempts are being increasingly made to stop up every loop-hole that still exists for such development.

Seeing the apparent backwardness of these peoples, many sections of the Labour movement have come to accept the backwardness as inherent in their stage of development, disregarding the force which prevents development and the facts that show that this inherent backwardness theory has no basis. Consequently, the underestimation of the capabilities of the African is prevalent throughout the movement and even in certain sections of the left-wing is quite sincerely held. Yet the experience of the developments which have taken place in the Soviet Union since the revolution in what were formerly the colonies of the Tsarist Empire should have gone far to dispel any such underestimation. Enormous vital forces were released amongst these nationalities by the revolution. Not only has illiteracy already been almost completely abolished, but what was largely a traditional and oral culture has blossomed forth into permanent written form already challenging comparison with the culture of what was formerly Russia proper. In addition, the economy has been revolutionised by the growth of great centres of industry, geological surveys have been undertaken revealing enormous hidden resources, and innumerable and ever-increasing numbers of outstanding figures have arisen from what was formerly treated as an illiterate mass under the Tsarist dictatorship, in all the various branches of industry, science, literature and art. And yet some of these peoples before the revolution

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were not very much further advanced eighteen years ago than the peoples of Africa at the present day.

Geoffrey Gorer, along with many others in the Labour movement on the basis of what seems to be the backwardness of these peoples, then puts the question: well, then, if independence was granted to-morrow would there not be chaos, anarchy, etc.? But this is putting the question in a completely unhistorical manner. No peoples who have ever been subjected to other peoples at any period of history have ever suddenly found themselves free to-morrow, as it were. The process of winning independence is a historical process. In this process what appear to be insuperable barriers between different nationalities, religions and languages which militate against the growth of solidarity necessary not only to gain independence but to organise the independent state, will be found to have been broken down.

Let us take the actual events in the struggle in the various African colonies in order first to see whether these struggles do not prove that the underestimation in the Labour movement in Britain of the capability of the Africans for revolutionary struggle is a fact and that this underestimation, as one would expect, naturally follows from the theory of the Africans' inferiority (we will also see that this same underestimation also exists very widely among the imperialists themselves—an important factor which contributes largely to the growing concern as revealed in recent bourgeois writings for the safety of their African empire as also to the almost panic-stricken measures which these imperialists are now taking to try and prevent any conscious movement from growing). Secondly, we will see how these facts will show that the barriers of nationality, language, etc., mentioned above, are actually being broken down in the historical process of the struggle.

At the same time we will refer in most cases to the methods used by the imperialists in their endeavour to suppress these movements and also to the attitude of the Labour Party towards these movements in order to emphasise once again how much the capabilities of the Africans are underestimated and how grave the consequences of this have been not only for the Africans, but also for the British workers as well.

The Nigerian Women's Movement Against Taxation

Let us first take the 1929 protest of the Nigerian women against taxation which was most ruthlessly suppressed, at least fifty women having been massacred, shot down in some cases by machine-gun fire, and in others driven into the rivers and left to drown (reports that have reached here indicate, however, that in all probability many more than fifty were massacred). We have at our disposal in this instance the report of a very complete enquiry into the massacre (this enquiry was the second,

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the first having been merely a white-washing affair ; this second enquiry was forced on the Government owing to very widespread protests in Nigeria and several Africans were put on the Committee). Though the the report stoutly denies that the Government ever had any intention of taxing women, nevertheless they admit that certain actions of officials in starting counting arrangements in some of the villages might have given cause for such rumours, especially as in 1926 a deliberate " deception " (in the words of the report) was practised in counting the inhabitants, including some of the villages concerned in the protest, while concealing from them that this was for the purpose of taxation of men. Contributory factors, the report further admits, were (1) discontent caused by taxation of men ; (2) " widespread discontent at the persecution, extortion and corruption practised by the so-called Warrant Chiefs or Native Court members "[1] and (3) the low prices ruling for produce and the high prices for imported goods (page 94, Report of the Aba Commission of Enquiry, 1930).

The protest we learn covered an area of over one hundred miles long by eighty broad in one of the most thickly populated, but at the same time so-called backward, areas of Southern Nigeria. On one page (95) the Report refers to " this unprecendented mass movement of women . . . . such energetic, purposeful initiative taken by women is unheard of in native history." One of the minority reporters goes even farther in this direction and says in referring to the Warrant Chiefs as being deeply distrusted by the women :

> " Therein," he says, " lies to my mind, the real explanation of the absolutely independent massed action of the women which is so utterly inconsistent with accepted ideas of the political and general dependence of women on their menfolk in this part of the world " (page 130).

And this, as he said, happened in areas some of which " were the most backward parts " (page 131)—we would add, in this most " backward " region of Nigeria.

Here we would only say is conclusive proof that the barrier of women as an "inferior" sex, the barrier created by the complete dependence of women on their menfolk, was broken down and utterly disappeared in the course of the struggle (it should be noted that it is the custom in this part of the world for women not to leave their houses at all except with the express permission of their husbands).

Now in describing the women's organisations, which the report asserts were behind the protest movement, one of the District Officers is quoted

[1]These Chiefs are really nothing but Government agents, in very few places being in any way recognised, let alone elected, by the tribes or sub-tribes over whom they are supposed to have authority. The Native Courts themselves are also admitted by this report to be only artificial graftings on native customs. These two institutions it may be said in passing are two of the main props of the much belauded system of Indirect Rule " invented " by Lord Lugard and sedulously propagated as being part and parcel of African life.

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with regard to the younger women's organisation (which came into existence, by the way, immediately after the conquest of Nigeria by British imperialism) in describing how it was built up, as saying that :

> The towns are grouped into areas which are made to correspond to Native Court areas, *irrespective of clan or tribal distinctions* (our emphasis, H.R.) (page 4 of Appendix III., 1).

This statement can be taken together with the evidence of one of the demonstrators who testified to the fact that a certain section of one of the demonstrations was " from different towns and tribes," herself saying that this section spoke one language which she did not understand (page 22 of Appendix III, 14a) ; this was repeated by others and confirmed by the Government Secretary of the province himself. It shows clearly that one of the chief barriers mentioned by Geoffrey Gorer, the barrier of language and tribal differences, was broken down in the action of the demonstration, prepared as it was by the fact that one organisation at least itself disregards tribal distinctions.

Lastly, we shall quote the following in order to prove how a movement which started primarily as a protest against taxation quickly took on much deeper significance with much wider demands as it developed.

It is clear from the Secretary's own version of events that the movement was a culmination of the tremendous body of bitterness that had been growing for several years as a result of the various forms of oppression : the spark was the preparation that seemed on foot to tax women, but in the words of the Secretary himself, " every grievance is connected either directly or indirectly with the Government " ; then referring to " the multifarious demands that were subsequently made by the women," he proceeds to claim that :

> It is no exaggeration to say that the movement finally assumed the character of a revolt against forms of established authority and control. Had stern measures not been taken to stem the tide of the outbreak there is every indication to show that the women's disturbance would have culminated in a general rising of the young men and women against all authority (page 42 of Appendix III., 1).

We have quoted these somewhat highly-coloured words, not because we necessarily think that the movement of itself did in fact take the character of an uprising, but because it certainly had that tendency, a tendency which was forced on it willy-nilly first by the guile of the agents of British imperialism, and secondly by the ferocious use of force that the Government employed in meeting the unarmed demonstrators—a use of force which the Report condemned in all cases but three* as having been " unjustified." Thus, from what started as a peaceful demonstration against the tax rumour developed into a quite consciously anti-imperialist movement. This movement, let it be emphasised once again,

* Out of 13 distinct places at which firing of one sort or another was resorted to.

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was organised over a very wide area with complete disregard of tribal differences in a region considered one of the most backward in a backward province by women who especially in this area were traditionally regarded as the inferior sex.

Now, owing to the brutal nature of the way in which this protest was put down, probably some of the solidarity which the struggle brought out has disappeared or has been so driven underground that it is only with difficulty surviving. Nevertheless, what news we have had at any rate of the women's movement on the Coast, shows that several partially successful agitations have since occurred, *e.g.*, with regard to the attempt to compel the market women to pay rent for their stalls on the grounds that they have been rebuilt or compulsorily moved to areas which were not the traditional ones and to land which must be rented, or again with regard to the agitation over burial grounds.

In the case of the 1929 massacre at least, the working-class movement in Britain must bear very great responsibility for the brutal nature with which the villages from where the women came were afterwards punished. For it will be remembered that it was the Labour Government that was ultimately responsible for this repression. The Labour Party, however, which to this day maintains that the Africans are not fit to govern themselves (*vide* their Hastings Conference Statement of 1933 on Colonial Policy) were only logically following out their opinion in putting down this protest through their Government. For if a people can't govern themselves or stand up by themselves as an independent community because of their backward development, they must have a strong government able to carry on in their place. Such governments need revenue and any protest, especially an organised one, against paying such revenue can justifiably be met with stern measures and even with force. Further any suggestion of meeting the representatives of the organisations which were behind this protest in conference to discuss the grievances of their members would, of course, be ruled as useless just because of this backward development.

What would have been the situation, we are entitled to ask, if the Labour Government had, following on this protest, repudiated the Imperialist agents who undoubtedly had been instructed by someone to make preparations at least for a preliminary census of the women with a view to taxation in some form. What would have been the situation had they taken the necessary steps to make it known that they as a Labour Government in Britain were against at least any further taxation at any rate of the mass of the population? What would have been the situation if the Labour Government had seen that the organisation behind this movement was consulted concerning the other grievances which the official report on the massacre clearly brought out that they

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undoubtedly possessed. Surely the support given by the Labour Government to such demands would have been one of the main factors in causing this movement to spread, and so *in the struggle training the population* to take over the Government when they had gained their independence. It is clear that this example alone shows that it is the process of the developing struggle against imperialism which enlightens the masses as to the aims of imperialism and at the same time trains a corps of the population who become the leaders of the mass of the people in building up the nucleus of the State which comes into being when freedom from imperialism has been secured.

The Home Rule Movement in the Gold Coast

Secondly, let us take the case of the Gold Coast, where there is undoubtedly a definite Home Rule Movement. It is in this colony where the feeling against imperialism has recently become most vocal. First of all, this is to some extent due to the fact that conditions forced the imperialists when they conquered this country to grant what they call a certain measure of independence to the Gold Coast which the Chiefs look upon as an alliance ? This, together with the fact that climatic conditions have made direct rule difficult and to the fact that cocoa has developed into a vital product for British Capitalism—all this has meant that a semblance of nationalism has grown up. But what has caused a very big advance in this area recently is the new policy of imperialism which is being developed in the colonies. One of the biggest factors has been in general capitalism's necessity to increase the exploitation of the colonial peoples in order to compensate for the decline in the aggregate of profits at home as a result of the post-war crises. Further, the collapse of the Gold Standard resulting as it has done in a very large increased price of gold has caused a big development in the exploitation of the gold resources of this colony, a development which was also impossible previously owing to the fact that the technique of gold-mining was not sufficiently advanced, as well as the technique of motor transport, etc.

The imperialists further saw that after the depression in cocoa prices when cocoa was being sold in the Gold Coast for a few shillings a bag, resulting in a mass agitation amongst the small farmers either for complete boycott of the market or for an organised restriction in production, or even for an attempted organisation of independent co-operative sales, that in order to insure an increase in the exploitation of this colony an increase in repression would be absolutely necessary.

Consequently, the attack on tribal customs has been tightened up as, for instance, in the arbitrary and increasing number of instances of destoolments[2] of even slightly recalcitrant chiefs and their replacement

[2]The stool in parts of West Africa is equivalent to the throne or crown as symbol of kingship or chieftainship. A Destoolment, therefore, is equivalent to forcible abdication.

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by puppets of imperialism ; laws or ordinances have been passed such as the Sedition Bill which aims at isolating the people of the Gold Coast from all contact with revolutionary or even progressive movements in other countries. The struggle of the Gold Coast people against, for instance, these two actions of the imperialists has undoubtedly given life to the Home Rule Movement, and also in the process has increased the class division in this movement.

For instance, take the events leading up to the appointment of the recent two delegations to this country from that colony. The first delegation was led by Nana Sir Offori Atta, a paramount chief who at any rate during certain periods had shown his loyalty to imperialism, *e.g.*, during the cocoa agitation when the price of cocoa fell to the lowest depths and the farmers tried to organise against it, at which point he was instrumental in preventing the movement from really becoming controlled by the mass of the small farmers, and secondly when he was for a time director of a gold mining company. This delegation to protest against these laws was suddenly got together with very little mass backing, and came to England refusing to have any contact with any non-Government people or organisations. Further, when they returned and reported that these laws were inevitable and had been passed in the best interests of the Africans to prevent anarchy, etc., etc., they were met in many cases with a very hostile reception. On the other hand, the present delegation now in England, the organisation of which it is stated actually led to the hasty collection of the first, the " loyal " delegation, claims to represent as delegates of the Aborigines Rights Protection Society a vast proportion of the people of the Gold Coast ; further, as a result of its insistence at not being satisfied with the reply given to the Atta delegation, it has had tremendous response in the Gold Coast. Meetings have been held all over the country and undoubtedly in consequence the home rule movement in general and the feeling of solidarity amongst the mass of the population has been growing. Moreover, through the instrumentality of this second delegation various questions have been raised here in Britain with regard even to the conditions in the gold mines, and if more could be done in this direction, particularly with the assistance of the Labour Movement here, the movement in the Gold Coast that is behind this delegation would undoubtedly develop a social programme which, in the struggle around it would not only lead to a still greater differentiation between those who are for or against imperialist rule in that country, but would develop the feeling of solidarity between those of different tribes or languages ; for instance, as in India, where the caste system in the mills is ignored by the workers owing to the conditions of co-operative work, so in the mines in the Gold Coast a similar process would happen.

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This is not to say that especially in the mines the imperialists realising the danger will not try and put obstacles in the way of solidarity being achieved. For they will do it in the Gold Coast just as is to be seen in South Africa or even more vividly in certain British owned sugar estates in Portuguese East Africa, where they try and keep the members of one tribe separated from another and hostile to each other in a regular hierarchy of work. For instance, on these sugar estates the white man is exclusively the manager or skilled clerk, then come West Indian Negroes imported as gangers; under them, in a grade of semi-skilled work on the estate are workers recruited from a nearby tribe, and below them doing the most unskilled and menial work are others recruited in a tribe up-country which is regarded there as at a lower stage of civilisation. The pay, of course, is suitably graded and each section of workers is treated with different conditions and of course any signs of hostility between them is encouraged. Nevertheless, even here on certain occasions solidarity movements have been partially successful.

In general, with regard to conditions on the West Coast of Africa, it is very significant that in contradistinction to the myth which exists in Britain that Nigeria is a model colony, the generally expressed attitude on the Gold Coast and Sierre Leone at any rate is to thank their stars that they are not ruled with such oppression as the Nigerians are. Further, they dread the arrival of anyone as a Governor who has at any time been an administrator in Nigeria, as they know that they will get some of the same medicine which is forced on the Nigerians. Concrete proof that this attitude has very real substance is to be seen from the fact that one of the arguments used by the local government's officials in the Gold Coast for imposing the Sedition Bill on the people there against an opposition which has been unparalleled in its extent, was that it was only what had for long been in force in Nigeria.

(*To be continued.*)

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THE MENACE TO WORLD PEACE IN MONGOLIA

By OBSERVER

"MONGOLIA, of which the world knows less than it knows of China, Siberia or Manchukuo, is the key to the destiny of the whole Far East." (Owen Lattimore: "The Mongols of Manchuria.")

During the months of January and February, 1936, there were no less than nine authenticated cases of attack by Japanese and Manchukuo troops on the borders of the People's Republic of Outer Mongolia. Probably, if minor affairs of the kind are taken into consideration, there were many more.

In the handling of the news of these attacks by officials in Tokyo there came, towards the middle of February, a significant change. Previously all aggression of Japanese and Manchukuo forces across the border of the People's Republic had been flatly denied. Each one of them was represented instead as an "aggression" in the opposite direction by troops of the People's Republic.

By the middle of February, however, there was made in Tokyo first an admission that Japanese and Manchukuo forces had crossed the frontier of the U.S.S.R., secondly an admission of fighting at a point shown on all maps as being well within the frontiers of the People's Republic of Outer Mongolia.

The change, in both cases, is of importance. The motive for the change in each case was different, but equally significant in each.

In the first case—the invasion of the U.S.S.R.—the invasion, having been first strenuously denied, was a few days later admitted in Tokyo and claimed as a right: on the ground that the invasion had occurred in the course of the pursuit of mutinous Manchukuo troops who, after rising against their Japanese officers, had gone to a Soviet frontier post and surrendered themselves for internment.

It was necessary for the Japanese Government—acting on the advice of the Japanese military authorities in Manchukuo—to admit and attempt to "justify" the act, because internal hostility to Japanese rule in Manchukuo is growing, because cases of near-mutiny are frequent, and because secure control of Manchukuo is not merely the end-objective of the

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Asiatic mainland thrust that began in 1931, but is the essential point of departure for the whole expansionist policy of Japan in Asia.

Therefore the exigencies of the Japanese Army Command in Manchukuo, which claimed a free hand to employ each and every means for the " discouragement " of mutiny and revolt, took precedence over other considerations in Tokyo which would have inclined the Japanese Government to avoid, as in the past, an admission of an infringement of the Soviet frontier.

The second admission—namely that fighting had occurred *South-West* of Lake Buirnor, that is to say on the Outer Mongolian side of the frontier running north and south through the lake—was of a different character. If the invasion of Soviet territory in the pursuit of mutineers was regarded as a necessity for the security of the base of operations, this invasion of the territory of the People's Republic marked the opening of a new stage in the outward expansionist operations themselves.

It followed a series of incidents in which the Japanese and Manchukuo troops were caught red-handed in the act of destroying the frontier posts. This in turn was followed by the first statements in Tokyo to the effect that the frontier was " undefined " (statements disagreeably reminiscent of the Italian communique issued immediately after the Wal Wal incident at the end of 1934).

The expected happened. With armoured cars and aeroplanes, the Japanese and Manchukuo troops—officered apparently entirely by Japanese—moved across the frontier to the south-west of Buirnor, and Tokyo gave out that they were engaged in " examination and rectification of the frontier." (A frontier upon which the only thing to " examine and rectify " was in fact the extent of the damage and confusion caused by the tampering with the frontier posts which had been carried out by the Japanese themselves).

The two incidents, the two admissions, form together a sufficiently concrete preliminary indication of the lines of Japanese policy, and of the reasons which put the borders of Outer Mongolia very high up on the list of what are called the " world's danger spots."

Strategically and politically, Outer Mongolia is one of the keys with which the Japanese hope to open for themselves control of the Far East. Strategically, because of its commanding flanking position in relation to Siberia and the Trans-Siberian railway. Politically, because it is with the offer of counter-revolution in Outer Mongolia, that the Japanese hope to build up the Princes and Priests and all the feudal Mongol forces in Manchukuo and Inner Mongolia, into a single powerful agency of Japanese imperialism.

In a nutshell, it is the policy of the Japanese to offer to these feudal forces a new Mongolian Empire, which shall include western Manchukuo,

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Inner Mongolia, and Outer Mongolia ; which shall be secured for Princely and Priestly exploitation through its alliance with the Japanese ; which shall, by virtue of the same alliance, be secure against such internal revolution as has ejected these elements from their hold on the wealth of Outer Mongolia ; which, finally, shall play in the creation of a Japanese Empire covering all Eastern Asia a rôle at least reminiscent of the part played by the Mongols in the rise of the Manchus to imperial control of China.

In their dealings with the Mongol Princes, the Japanese political agents point back through history to the great days of the Mongols ; back, less far, to the story of the Chinese colonisation of the Mongol lands, and the Mongols' waning power. Coming to the situation of to-day, they point north to the People's Republic of Outer Mongolia, where Princes and reactionary lamas have been cast down. They point south and west, where rise and grow strong the Chinese Soviets, and the movement for the liberation of China from Japanese imperialism and all its agents.

To the Princes and Lamas, they offer one " way out " : alliance with Japan.

For these feudal forces the problem is urgent. For if there is talk of the uniting of the Mongol peoples, then it is clear that unity under feudal and Japanese control, is not the only sort of unity the Mongol peoples might choose. The example of the successful throwing off of feudalism and of foreign control in the People's Republic of Outer Mongolia offers a very different solution, very stirring to the people of Inner Mongolia and of Manchukuo, who have experienced all sorts of exploitation, and are now learning something of Japanese exploitation too. In this situation the Japanese imperialists cannot afford to " mark time." Their policy, if it is to succeed, must be continuously a " positive " policy in the most aggressive sense of the word. They must be forever " tinkering " with the Mongol Princes, and forever nibbling and biting at the frontiers.

The direct attacks upon the Outer Mongolian frontiers are an obvious step in this policy. The steady extension of control over the five northern provinces of China is a part of the same policy. Its importance as an aggression, and as a disturbance of the peace in the Far East can only be fully understood when it is realised that this direct and gross dismemberment of China is conducted by the Japanese as a preliminary to the creation of this puppet empire which they hope to see spread like a plague sore across the body of that part of Asia.

Continued attack on north China, continued disturbance on the Outer Mongolian frontier, are essentials of the policy of the Japanese imperialists. For they are the essential preliminaries to the " war among the Mongols," which is planned as the next important step in the attack on Outer Mongolia. (It would be a setback for Tokyo's plans if it were impossible to dress up its next attack as in essence a " Mongol civil war.")

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Two " short term " factors have contributed to the volume of the Japanese attacks during the past few weeks.

One is the fact that during the end of January and first twenty days of February, an election campaign was in progress in Japan. The militarists and fascists of the Seiyukai Party saw on the one hand an extraordinary growth of anti-militarist and anti-fascist feeling among the masses of the people. They saw, too, that the big financiers of the Minseito Party, frightened by the financial consequences of the militarist policy, were turning in the election to more openly anti-militarist slogans than they have ever used before, in the hope of rallying behind them the masses whom they saw moving towards the Social Democratic Workers' and Peasants' Party.

A series of noisy fireworks on the Manchukuo frontier, scare stories of aggression, and the ever-present thunder cloud of war, were seen by the leaders of the Right Wing of the Seiyukai as a useful election dodge.

The second of these " short term " factors was the desirability from the point of view of the Tokyo militarists and their allies in the Berlin War Office, of doing everything possible to create a war scare on the eve of the debate in the French Chamber on the ratification of the Franco-Soviet Pact.

The purpose, agreed between Berlin and Tokyo, was to terrify if possible some elements of the French bourgeoisie with the belief that they were about to conclude a pact with a country on the verge of war.

The greater interest of both these factors is to be found on, so to speak, their reverse side. The extent to which, for example, the people of France and other countries succeed in furthering the construction of the Soviet peace system, thus holding in check the aggressive plans so hopefully worked out between the General Staffs in Tokyo and Berlin, will have, obviously, the most immediate repercussions on the extent to which the Japanese militarists are in a position to prosecute their plans on the Mongolian frontiers.

The development of the anti-war and anti-fascist front in Japan itself is clearly, too, a major factor operating in the same direction.

At the same time is to be noted that the development in China of the National Revolutionary movement, inspired by the Chinese Soviets and their Red Army, for the defence of China against Japanese imperialism is affecting very seriously the balance of forces on the basis of which the Japanese plans were laid. The Japanese require in China itself a Government which shall act as an agent of Tokyo. The substitution of a Government in China devoted to the defence of China against Japanese imperialism would in fact provide the most powerful imaginable force for peace in the Far East.

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THE STAKHANOV MOVEMENT

By ANDREW ROTHSTEIN

[*In view of the fact that there is still quite widespread misunderstanding in this country as to the real significance of this important movement the* LABOUR MONTHLY *gives the following first survey of its origin and progress. If readers have problems on this movement which seem not cleared up by this article they are asked to write to the* LABOUR MONTHLY; *for arrangements have heen made for a further article to be published in the April issue by Comrade E. Woolley who is now in the Soviet Union and is making a special study of this question. To enable Comrade Woolley to deal with any reader's problems these should reach the* MONTHLY'S *office, 7 John Street, London, W.C.1. not later than March 12th.*

WHEN Alexei Stakhanov went down the Central Irmino pit in the Donetz coalfield on the night of August 30th, 1935, he did not realise that his mechanical pick was not merely about to cut a clear road through 112 yards of coal where previously eight hewers had been working, but was going to drive a way right through into a new and unprecedented stage in the development of Socialist forms of labour.

Stakhanov had been approached, like many other active non-Communist miners, by the party officials of his pit—themselves working miners—to see whether he had any ideas on how Stalin's watchword of mastering technique could be applied in a pit which was well behind its programme of output. Stakhanov contemplated his up-to-date mechanical pick, and the resources available for removing the coal when cut: he thought of the public money which had been spent on such modern machinery, and of the public good which must come from its proper use: he was stimulated by the thought of the growing prosperity beginning to be visible on all sides in the Soviet Union: and he applied his brains—the brains of a workman brought up out of ignorance and poverty by the colossal social forces ever at play in the U.S.S.R.—to the problem of how his work, and the work of others, could best be organised.

The result was that, instead of using his pick for barely three hours in a small niche of the almost vertical seam of coal, and spending the other half of his valuable skilled time on timbering, Stakhanov cut straight down through the whole district of the pit, and turned out 102 tons in just under six hours, as against seven tons previously. Four days later his party organiser, in friendly emulation, cut 115 tons. On September 9th Stakhanov "came back" with 175 tons. Two days later Izotov,

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hero of an earlier stage in the history of Soviet labour, cut 240 tons. So it went on. By November 4th, someone—with nine men timbering behind him, as he cut away the coal—turned out 536 tons. And in December a Siberian miner, working under exceptionally favourable conditions in a sloping seam, cut 2,100 tons in his six-hour shift.

But if we only look at these figures as a matter of records, we won't understand the first thing about the mighty Stakhanov movement which has since swept over the whole Soviet Union like a prairie fire. The really important thing is what passed through Stakhanov's mind before he went down on that fateful night in August. Stalin's genius discerned these four ingredients of the Stakhanov movement—Soviet prosperity: the absence of capitalism: the most modern technique: and the new Soviet man—in the first beginnings of the movement, and threw them into high relief by his speech at the first Conference of Stakhanov workers in Moscow, in November.

For these thoughts that passed through Stakhanov's mind were not peculiar to the Soviet mining industry: they were equally well stimulated by conditions in the engineering, textile, railway, leather and other industries of the Soviet Union. That, and that alone, is the explanation of the fact that no sooner had Stakhanov's achievement been published far and wide, in the thousands of Soviet newspapers, than a tidal wave of similar initiative and achievement rose in response all over the country. Stakhanov's pick had broken down more than the barriers in his own line of work which fettered productivity.

The results in other industries showed this. Krivonoss, an engine driver, raised his average commercial speed from 23 to 47 kilometres per hour. Busygin, in the blacksmith's shop at the Gorki Motor works, raised his output from 450 crankshafts forged per shift to 1,100. Smetanin sewed 1,800 pairs of boots on his modern machine, instead of 700 which he was doing before. Samarin, a bricklayer in Moscow, raised his average output per shift from 3,500 bricks laid to 8,000. Dusia Vinogradova, at a great textile mill in Ivanovo, was on 36 of the most modern automatic Northrop looms before the change (there are few British mills which have installed these costly looms: they prefer to make the workers bear the burden of increased production on out-of-date machines). After she had been fired by the example of Stakhanov, she went on to 100, and later 210 looms, increasing the output of these looms by 30 per cent.

What is the secret of these and similar achievements? It lies in the team work on a new basis which the Stakhanovists introduced. In the mining industry, the hewer concentrates on hewing, utilising every minute of his valuable six hour day, and every second that his pneumatic or electrical pick, or mechanical coalcutter, can be made to work. But

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his efforts have to be correspondingly backed by one or more men putting up props, supplying compressed air, preparing the ground for the next shift, etc. All share in the increased piece rate earnings produced by the much larger out-turn of coal. Hewers set free by this rearrangement go to make up another shift.

Similarly in the textile industry. One Lancashire paper thought it had made a " great " discovery when it declared that Dusia Vinogradova, with her nine helpers, is simply a charge hand. That is nonsense. Vinogradova is not there to watch the work of others : she carries out a highly important function in the labour process affecting her particular 210 looms ; and so do all the others ; and their work is interdependent. She walks in a regular route, never deviating, round her group of looms, at which the others are busy on particular jobs, and watches for any of the automatic signals which show that the thread has broken on a particular loom, and that the latter has in consequence stopped. When this appears, she is able to continue on her route without haste, and to deal with the problem when she reaches it. The same methodical progress is maintained by the other members of her team. The consequence is greatly increased output and a great reduction of waste.

" And probably a great increase in speed-up and exhaustion ? " asks someone. Quite wrong. Vinogradova herself, like Busygin, like Stakhanov, testifies that she is no more fatigued than before, and often is less fatigued. She does social work after her shift : others attend lectures and technical classes : others again go to the theatre or pictures. Nowhere is the Stakhanov movement producing robots or squeezed-out lemons at the end of the working day. Nowhere and in no respect does the Stakhanov movement, consequently, bear any resemblance to the Taylor system, the Bedaux system, or any other allegedly " scientific " method of squeezing extra work and extra profits out of the worker, with the help of machinery (by the simple expedient—when the hocus-pocus is stripped away—of threatening him with dismissal unless he strains himself a little more).

Nor is it any reply to the challenge of the Stakhanov movement to say that the particular division of labour which it introduces, or the figures of output reached, can be paralleled in this country. Only a short time ago the productivity of many Soviet skilled workers was still considerably behind that of workers in Western countries, and the difference has been covered—not everywhere as yet—at a bound. But it is not without significance that in the youngest industries, with the latest equipment, western standards have been left in some cases far behind. Thus machinery of the Stalingrad Tractor Works was planned by the American firm which installed it to turn out 72 tractors per shift. After a struggle lasting several years (and providing much cheap amusement for anti-Soviet propagandists of the day) this level was reached, and maintained

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for several more years. To-day Stalingrad is turning out 120 tractors per shift, and Kharkov, its still younger consort, produces 144.

The Stakhanov movement has in this and other cases already justified to the full the Soviet policy of industrialising the country with the very latest and most up-to-date machinery, even at the cost of considerable wastage while the millions of unskilled and semi-skilled workers were learning their trade. Wiseacres told the Soviet Union that it ought to "learn to walk before it could run," and study industry in the school of early 19th century machinery before it went on to that of the 20th century. To-day the Soviet proletariat includes a section, numbering several millions, who are already familiar, out of their own practical experience, with the best method of manipulating the most modern and productive machinery (within the framework of a seven-hour day), and millions more every year are being added to their number. 800,000 workers in heavy industry alone acquired the "technical minimum" of knowledge in heavy industry last year, and the slogan of the Soviet working class is to raise every workman to the technical level of a fully trained engineer within a few years. The Soviet Union and the Bolsheviks have been proved right, and the wiseacres abjectly and hopelessly wrong.

Wages have heavily increased, and the average rise planned for 1936 is 8 per cent. But the Stakhanov movement cannot rest content with a standard of individual output calculated years ago, on the basis of more elementary machinery and with a far less skilled working class in mind. At the Central Committee of the Communist Party recently, it was revealed that in 10 of the large Soviet factories, employing 35,000 workers, where an investigation was made, 97 per cent. were over-fulfilling their individual standard of output per shift. The general run of statistics in heavy industry shows that 5 to 10 per cent. of the workers were producing below the standard, about 40 per cent. were producing from 20 to 40 per cent. above standard, and upwards of 50 per cent. were producing from 50 to 100 per cent. above standard and more. "This is not a standard, but a misunderstanding," as was pungently remarked by Orjonikidze, the People's Commissar for Heavy Industry. Consequently, there is a question of raising the individual quota required of each worker, although, of course, the new standard cannot be anything comparable with the records achieved in particular cases by the Stakhanovist groups. That this will not lead either to wage cuts or unemployment, in Soviet conditions, is shown by the fact of the wage increase budgeted for, and the plan for one million more workers in industry in 1936.

What then is the Stakhanov movement? It is the rational application of Socialist enthusiasm to the most modern technique. As such, as Stalin pointed out in his memorable speech at the Conference of

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Stakhanovists in November, it represents a new stage in the Socialist attitude of the ordinary Soviet citizen towards labour, the germ and foreshadowing of the Communist attitude to labour of the future. The Stakhanov movement therefore rests on the shoulders of a previous chain of heroic achievement which began with the revolution itself, as soon as the worker felt himself master of his country and responsible for its fortunes.

On Saturday, May 10th, 1919, railwaymen of the Moscow-Kazan line, Communists and sympathisers, went out and did a six hours day free, loading and unloading fuel, in the cause of the community. This first Communist Saturday (" subbotnik ") lit a flame that also fired the whole country. It was a very different country, starving, ragged and disease-ridden. But the great genius Lenin saw the meaning of what had happened. He wrote in his famous pamphlet : " The Great Initiative " (June, 1919) :

> Productivity of labour is in the last analysis the most important condition for the victory of the new social order. Capitalism created a productivity of labour unheard of in the days of serfdom. Capitalism can be finally beaten, and will be finally beaten, by Socialism creating a new and very much higher productivity of labour. This is a very difficult and long-drawn out job, but it has begun—that is the main point. If in hungry Moscow, in the summer of 1919, hungry workmen who have lived through four painful years of imperialist war, and then one and a half years of still more painful civil war, have been able to begin that great work, what will development be like later on, when we are victorious in the civil war, and win through to peace ?

The impetus of the Communist Saturdays, applied as they were to unskilled jobs in the main, is still alive and energetic. It seems only yesterday that the capital city of the Soviet Union was proclaiming at every street corner that " all Moscow builds the Underground," and proving it by the scores of thousands who cheerfully went down to do their free work for the community, on rest days and after their ordinary working day was done. They have had an ample reward, in the magnificent Metro which is the pride of the Soviet Union and the admiration of all foreigners who see it.

The resumption of the Socialist offensive on the economic field—the period of the Five Year Plans—saw also the advance of this new attitude to labour on a higher plane, in the shape of Socialist Competition. In March, 1929, on the initiative of members of the Young Communist League, miners of the Donetz coalfield at Lugansk and Shakhty began to compete with each other in over-fulfilling their plan. Textile workers in Moscow, Ivanovo, and Tver, signed agreements with each other to do the same. Hundreds of shock brigaders, and shock shifts, all pledged to work better than their fellows and over-fulfil their quota, were formed. Collective farms joined in the movement. By 1932 there were over four million members of the shock brigades. It was thanks to this

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movement and the " counter planning " which it produced—in the shape of suggestions from below to outdo the programmes of output worked out by the management—that the first Five Year Plan was fulfilled in four and a quarter years.

The Stakhanov movement, therefore, has its great past as well as the certainty of a far greater future. What future? It is difficult to conceive of it to-day. But Engels sketched its outlines in bold anticipation nearly 60 years ago, when he wrote :

> The expanding force of the means of production bursts asunder the bonds imposed upon them by the capitalist mode of production. Their release from these bonds is the sole condition necessary for an unbroken and consequently more rapidly progressing development of the productive forces, and therewith of a practically limitless growth of production itself. Nor is this all. The appropriation by society of the means of production will put an end, not only to the artificial restraints on production which exists to-day, but also to the positive waste and destruction of productive forces and products which is now the inevitable accompaniment of production, and reaches its zenith in crises . . . . The possibility of securing for every member of society, through social production, an existence which is not only fully sufficient from a material standpoint and becoming richer from day to day, but also guarantees to them the completely unrestricted development and exercise of their physical and mental faculties—this possibility now exists for the first time, but it *does exist*.
>
> (*Anti-Dühring*, 1935 English Edition, p. 317.)

The Soviet proletariat is not inclined, however, to allow visions of the dazzling future to blind it to the practical problems of to-day, or to allow past successes to stand in the way of present efforts. The Stakhanov movement has brought out old problems more sharply, and brought forward new tasks. The necessity of revising individual standards of output has already been mentioned. A conference of the building trades (to take another example) has revealed that this industry lags behind almost every other in allowing slavish and semi-Asiatic rates of output to persist and clog the progress of the many young, energetic and forward-looking elements, both among manual workers and among engineers and organisers. The existence of Stakhanovists in this industry, with truly remarkable achievements in such fields as bricklaying and cement pouring—achievements reached by the scientific breaking up of the process of production and its reallocation among a team working together—shows that there is no inherent reason for the building industry falling behind the others.

Again, the Stakhanov movement has revealed with particular force weaknesses in the trade unions, and the fire of proletarian self-criticism is being directed on this front too. Last May Stalin, in conversation with the leaders of the Soviet trade unions, already had occasion to point out the unsatisfactory character of much of the work of the trade unions ;

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while lately one of the secretaries of the Soviet T.U.C., Polonsky, frankly declared that the trade unions had " proved less than other organisations prepared for the Stakhanov movement." Weinberg, another secretary, pointed out that the trade unions in many cases were " falling behind the advancing mass of the workers and the tumultuous Socialist development of the country." The necessity for far greater and closer attention to safety, health, and welfare arrangements in the factory: for more rapid and energetic reaction to problems of piece rates, and generally to workers' criticisms of production conditions: for far greater activity in the educational and cultural spheres, etc.—these are the problems which are now being thrashed out, through the length and breadth of the 20 million strong Soviet trade union movement, in factory meetings as well as the press, and with a wealth of practical examples and constructive criticisms.

No one who knows the history of the Soviet working-class can doubt but that in this creative furnace the Soviet working-class will temper the Stakhanov movement into a still greater weapon with which to continue its irresistible drive ahead to the classless society and Socialist prosperity—as well as, if necessary, a thunderbolt to crush all who try by arms to hinder their progress.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

I Will Not Rest. Romain Rolland. (Selwyn & Blount.) 320 pp. 8s. 6d.

The Soviet Union and World Peace. Anna Louise Strong. (International Pamphlets.) 30 pp. 3d.

Japan's Drive to Conquest. Grace Hutchins. (International Pamphlets.) 31 pp. 3d.

Friedrich Engels. Gustav Mayer. (Chapman & Hall.) 323 pp. 15s.

Trade Unionism and Labour Disputes in India. Ahmad Mukhtar. (Longmans, Green & Co. Ltd.) 251 pp. 10s. 6d.

Key in Our Bosom. Whyte Hall. (Heath Cranton Ltd.) 160 pp. 3s. 6d.

Modern Sociologists: Pareto. By Dr. Franz Borkenaw. *Tylor.* By Dr. R. R. Marett. (Chapman & Hall.) 220 pp. 6s. each.

Kino News. Winter, 1935. An Occasional Sheet issued by Kino Films (1935) Ltd., 84 Gray's Inn Road, W.C.1. 4 pp. 1d.

Social-Democracy in Britain. Fifty years of the Socialist Movement. H. W. Lee and E. Archibold. Social-Democratic Federation, 54 Colebrooke Row, London, N.1. 288 pp. Cloth 7s. 6d., Paper 3s. 6d.

Draft for a Programme for the Socialist Party of the United States as formulated by the Left Wing. (Socialist Call, New York City.) 31 pp. 6d.

Public Control of Road Passenger Transport. D. N. Chester. (Manchester University Press.) 226 pp. 8s. 6d.

U.S.S.R. Economics. Fundamental Data, System and Spirit. M. Polyani. (Manchester University Press.) 25 pp.

Capitalism and the Consumer. Fred Henderson. (Allen & Unwin Ltd.) 156 pp. 4s. 6d.

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BOOK REVIEWS

AN INDIAN ON "THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION."

[*The following appraisal of one of Stalin's most famous works expresses an Indian view specially contributed which the* LABOUR MONTHLY *prints as of some interest though controversial on several points.*]

The October Revolution. By Joseph Stalin. (Martin Lawrence.) pp. 168. 2s. paper, 3s. 6d. cloth.

STUDENTS of the Russian Revolution in particular and world politics in general will greet this book by the foremost disciple of Lenin as an outstanding contribution to the revolutionary literature of the world. Here the reader comes face to face with the brilliant analysis and devastating pen of Joseph Stalin, the guiding spirit of the international revolutionary movement. Even such a writer like G. B. Shaw had to admit in the much talked-of "Stalin-Wells' controversy," that "Stalin also wields a trenchant pen and can put controversial opponents on the spot as effectively as kulaks." The book under review completely justifies the above remark.

It is a collection of articles and speeches by Stalin ranging over a decade from November, 1917 to December, 1927. This collection has a great historical meaning since questions discussed here relate to the different phases of the Russian Revolution. They reveal the tactics and controversies through which the Russian Communist Party passed in its difficult task of establishing and strengthening Soviet Rule. In this connection Lenin's sentence is very significant.

"BOLSHEVISM CAN SERVE AS A MODEL OF TACTICS FOR ALL."

Trotsky, the chief political adversary of Stalin, is read everywhere. A great misunderstanding and a still greater ignorance prevails among the general public on the historic controversy between Stalin and Trotsky which resulted in the expulsion and subsequent exile of Trotsky from U.S.S.R. Similar is the case though on a smaller scale regarding the Right Opposition headed by Zinoviev and Kamenev to the Leninist policy of Stalin. The differences between Stalin and Trotsky on the one hand and Stalin and Zinoviev-Kamenev on the other are of a fundamental and permanent character. They can never be explained or explained away on the tiny caucus of personal likes and dislikes. Instead they have a profound revolutionary significance for our epoch.

The first article on The National Question has a deep meaning for colonial peoples. Immediately after the fall of Tzarism the bourgeoisie in the different non-Russian regions tried to exploit the masses in the name of nationalism. The national flag was unfurled to consolidate the rule of the bourgeoisie. Woodrow Wilson's "principle of self-determination," was propagated about and the national governments sprang up everywhere. But the rising masses put a revolutionary interpretation upon this principle. The bourgeois conception of self-determination was thrown overboard and the proletarian conception of all power to the rising masses of the oppressed nations triumphed. Foreign intervention was invoked by these national governments to suppress and nullify the proletarian revolution. All this should serve as an eye-opener to those who still piously believe in the national patriotism of the bourgeoisie.

"The October Insurrection," "The Political State of the Republic," "Three Years of Proletarian Dictatorship," and "The Party after the Seizure of Power," will be read with great interest and profit.

The article on "The National Policy of the Russian Communists" is important. The most savage and barbarous war of intervention and continued blockade by the former allies of Tzarism against Soviet Russia for throttling the nascent proletarian dictatorship under the paternal guidance of that greatest of all revolutionaries, Comrade Lenin, proved utterly

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ineffective and futile because of the renunciation of the rights and claims in the non-Russian regions of the Bolsheviks, the liberators of the oppressed world. The dying and degenerate bourgeoisie is everywhere engaged in broadcasting the dirty and mischievous canards of Red Imperialism. The toiling and downtrodden masses can never be duped by such dirty propaganda. Even a beginner in the theory of socialism knows that Red Imperialism is a contradiction in terms. The voluntary entry of the border countries into the Soviet Union has a world-wide significance.

The small article on "The Alliance Between the Workers and Peasants" is out of all proportions. The Kautskian theory which rejects the "regularity" of the Russian Revolution is here blown to the winds. According to Kautsky the petty-bourgeoisie, more especially the peasantry never supports the proletarian struggle. On the contrary, it is the reserve army of the counter-revolutionary forces. He insists on an indispensable majority of the proletariat. It is nothing but a vulgarisation of Marxian analysis. The success of the Russian Revolution is a standing monument to Lenin's thesis.

In "The Strategy of the Russian Communists" the reader sees the Russian Revolution in the making. The supreme revolutionary genius of Lenin plays havoc with Tzarism and all its allies. Here we can do nothing better than quote Lenin's different slogans corresponding to the different periods, 1905, 1917 after February; and 1917 after October.

> 1905. Revolutionary blow at Tzarism along the line of a coalition of the proletariat with the peasantry neutralising the Liberal bourgeoisie.
>
> 1917 after February. Blow at the bourgeoisie by the combined forces of the proletariat and the poor peasantry.
>
> 1917 after October. Utmost possible—in one—our own country for the development, support, and stirring-up of the revolution in all countries.

The post-Lenin policy of Soviet Russia has never betrayed the idea of world revolution. The attack of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party at the time of the April demonstration is a classic example of what communists' tactics should be.

Stalin's pen takes us to critical heights in the question of the middle strata. The lines quoted from Marx's letter to Engels are historically pregnant. How many critical students know anything about this letter. The premature Russian Revolution is prophetically backed by Marx himself when he writes:

> The whole thing in Germany will depend on the possibility to back the proletarian revolution by some second edition of the peasant war.

Stalin here makes it quite clear how the Russian Revolution is a Leninist edition of this thesis of Marx. Stalin shows how it is a brilliant combination of proletarian revolution, peasant war and national war. He says:

> The October revolution has ushered in a new epoch, an epoch of colonial revolutions which are carried out in the oppressed countries of the world in alliance with the proletariat and under the leadership of the proletariat.

Herein lies the international significance of October.

"Trotskyism or Leninism" and "The Tactics of the Russian Communists" should be read together. We have at the outset remarked that a great ignorance prevails regarding the controversy between Trotsky and Stalin. Any unbiassed critic will have to admit after he has studied the different relevant portions from the works of Lenin, Stalin and Trotsky, that Trotsky with all his dazzling intellectual brilliance lacks critical acumen. Hence his theoretical and tactical approach to problems projected by the Russian Revolution did not lead to correct results. His ideological conflicts with Lenin go back to the opening years of this century. He differed with Lenin on the composition of the party, on the analysis of the situation, and consequent tactical approaches. Excepting the brief period of October, Trotsky never stood on the same platform with Lenin and the Bolshevik Party. His differences were always vital and

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fundamental. On the other hand, Stalin consistently followed and later developed the correct Leninist approach. The two articles referred to above together cover full 62 pages. It is the peculiarity of Stalin's writings that he is always brief, concise, yet penetrating. Particularly so is the case with the articles under consideration. Hence, it is impossible to do full justice to Stalin in a brief review like this. We therefore strongly recommend the reader to refer to the original works and study the whole controversy critically. A critical study is bound to bring home the truth that Stalin is on correct lines.

Stalin has never denied Trotsky's great contribution to the success of October. In the book under review on page 30, he refers to Trotsky's achievements. But it never means that Trotsky can ever share Lenin's title. Lenin and Lenin alone was the sole inspirer of October. In "Trotskyism of Leninism," Stalin has effectively dealt with the many legends regarding Trotsky's rôle in "October," "Brest," and "Civil Wars," and has convincingly referred to the magnificent contribution of the party under Lenin's guidance. The real rôle of the party can be fully understood from the following sentence of Lenin quoted from *Left-Wing Communism :*

> Bolshevism as a trend of political thought and as a political party existed since 1903. Only the history of Bolshevism during the whole period of its existence can satisfactorily explain why it was able to build up and maintain under most difficult conditions the iron discipline necessary for the victory of the proletariat.

The following few relevant quotations from the works of Lenin and Trotsky will help the reader to understand Stalin's correct line of action.

The main controversy has centred round Trotsky's theory of "Permanent Revolution," which is directly opposed to Lenin's theory of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

Trotsky :

1. The proletariat will come into hostile collision not only with the bourgeois grouping—but also with the broad masses of the peasants—the contradiction in the situation of the workers' government in a backward country with an overwhelming majority of peasants can be solved only on an international scale on the arena of world proletarian revolution.—(From the preface to Trotsky's book, *The Year* 1905, written in 1922.)
2. It would be hopeless in the light of the experience of history and in the light of theoretical considerations to think for example that a revolutionary Russia could hold its own in the face of the conservative Europe.—(Trotsky's *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, Part 7.)
3. Without direct state support from the European proletariat the working class of Russia cannot maintain itself in power and transform its temporary rule into a durable socialist dictatorship. This we cannot doubt for an instant.—(*Our Revolution.*)
4. That genuine advance in the construction of socialist economy in Russia will become possible only after the victory of the proletariat in the most important countries of Europe.—(Trotsky's *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, Part 1.)

Lenin says on the other hand :

1. Uneven economic and political development is an absolute law of capitalism. Hence the victory of Socialism is possible first in a few or even in one single capitalist country taken separately.—Lenin's *Collected Works*, Vol. 18.)
2. The dictatorship of the proletariat is a special form of class alliance between the proletariat—and the numerous non-proletarian strata of toilers—peasantry, etc., or the majority of these. It is an alliance aiming at the complete overthrow of capital—an alliance aiming at the final establishment and consolidation of socialism.—(Lenin's *Collected Works*, Vol. 24.)
3. Trotsky is really helping the Liberal-Labour politicians in Russia who interpret "denying" the rôle of the peasantry to mean unwillingness to rouse the peasantry to revolution.—(Lenin's *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 318.)
4. We shall all of us together—not tomorrow, but within a few years—perform this task at all costs so that out of the N.E.P. Russia will come Socialist Russia.—(Lenin's *Collected Works*, Vol. 37.)

Stalin, in his noteworthy comment on this controversy, says :

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1. Lenin speaks of the alliance of the proletariat and the toiling strata of the peasantry as the foundation of the dictatorship of the proletariat. In Trotsky we find the hostile collision of the proletarian vanguard with the broad masses of the peasants.
2. Lenin speaks of the leadership of the toiling and exploited masses by the proletariat. In Trotsky we find contradictions in the situation of the workers' government in a backward country with an overwhelming majority of peasants.
3. According to Lenin, the revolution draws its forces chiefly from among the workers and peasants of Russia itself. According to Trotsky the necessary forces can be found only on the arena of the world proletarian revolution.

In the light of the recent developments in the successful construction of socialism in the U.S.S.R., we cannot help saying that history's verdict has gone against Trotsky.

In the three articles on "Prospects of our Developments," "The Three Basic Slogans of the Party on the Peasant Question," and "The Slogan of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat and the Poorest Peasantry," Stalin analyses in detail the different slogans given by the Bolsheviks. These pages will fully repay a serious reading.

Appraising the international character of October, Stalin says:

> By weakening the power of imperialism in the "mother countries" and undermining its domination in the colonies, the October Revolution has jeopardised the very existence of world capitalism as a whole.

The last article on "The Trotsky-Zinoviev Opposition Block" is most enlightening. Many students find it difficult to satisfactorily account for the block of Zinoviev and Kamenev with Trotsky for whose expulsion they were so vociferously clamouring earlier. Kamenev and Zinoviev always displayed a halting and hesitating attitude on all critical occasions. Rightism always wavers in face of a rising tempo. It gets paralysed. At the time of October, Kamenev and Zinoviev opposed the uprising; and later, in alliance with Trotsky, they opposed socialist construction. Trotsky on the other hand, was continually obsessed with his idea of "Permanent Revolution." So rightism embraced leftism. The former opponents joined hands in the name of revolution.

It will be clear from the foregoing analysis that Stalin's ideological fight with his opponents both from the right and left camp is alone responsible for the increasing triumph of Leninism. There is no betrayal. Instead a grim yet successful and widening struggle on a higher level, in the cause of world revolution.

V. D. CHITALE.

A WORLD UNEMPLOYMENT

Three Sources of Unemployment. By Wladimir Woytinsky. Published for the International Labour Office by P. S. King & Son. pp. 166. 5s.

THE author's objective is to analyse, by means of a statistical device, the total volume of unemployment into its three components, due respectively to population increase, technological progress and general economic development. How far such an analysis is valid and whether it is of any value when it has been made, may be open to question; but in the course of it the author has managed to collect together some very interesting statistical information on the development of production, employment, unemployment, and output per head in the chief capitalist countries of the world. He deals particularly with Great Britain and the United States and contrasts their development before and since the war. The following table, which shows the average annual percentage increase over the periods named in the number of persons occupied in industry, industrial production and output per head, summarises this contrast.

AVERAGE ANNUAL INCREASE PER CENT.

GREAT BRITAIN—	1861— 1911	1924— 1929	1924— 1934
Workers employed in Industry	1.3	0.52	1.17
Industrial Production	1.85	2.26	0.45
Output per Head ..	0.59	2.88	1.84

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U.S.A.—	1869—1899	1899—1913	1923—1929
Workers employed in Industry	3.2	3.4	1.7
Industrial Production	5.6	4.5	3.2
Output per Head ..	2.3	1.1	5.5

Thus, while before the war both industrial employment and production were increasing; since the war production has gone on increasing, but industrial employment has actually declined. In both countries output per head has shown a big jump in the rate of increase as compared with pre-war. The decline in industrial employment in Britain, however, is due to a fall in the numbers employed in mining, the number in manufacturing industry showing a small increase. In the U.S.A. the latter taken alone shows a decline. Nevertheless, even in Britain the increase in the number of workers employed in manufacture is very small compared with that in non-industrial occupations (2.3 per cent. between 1924 and 1929 as compared with 13.6 per cent.). It is clear that the *tendency* is the same in Britain as in the United States. This is shown even more clearly by the changes in the percentage distribution of the working population in Britain between 1923 and 1933.

	Percentage of Total Number Insured at July, 1923	July, 1933
Shipping and Fishing ..	1.3	1.5
Mining	11.9	8.8
Manufacturing	48.1	43.1
Building	8.1	10.0
Distributive Trades, Commerce, Banking, &c.	12.9	17.4
Other industries and services	17.7	19.2
TOTAL ..	100.0	100.0

The author concludes: "There is little hope of success for any attempt to restore the balance of the labour market by transferring the "surplus" workers from industry to non-industrial occupations. Commerce and transport may not so far be overcrowded occupations in Britain, but the time will inevitably come when the mechanism of distribution will have to be rationalised. And then hundreds of thousands or even millions of commercial employees and workers will be thrown out of employment." (In actual fact the process of rationalisation in commerce and transport has already begun, as witness the speed-up introduced on the railways and on the buses in recent years, the fall of nearly 20 per cent. between 1925 and 1934 in the number of workers employed on the railways, and the introduction of mechanical methods by insurance companies and banks.) Faced with this prospect, what are the workers to do about it? I am afraid they will receive no answer to this question from our author. He is concerned simply with dividing unemployment into three parts and does not attempt any real analysis of the contradictions of capitalism, or of the methods of solving those contradictions. In fact one may say that his book is useful rather for the statistics he has collected together than for the use he makes of them. Nevertheless, the above confirmation of the correctness of the Marxist analysis coming from such a source is striking enough.

F. W. B.

TWO WORKING-CLASS NOVELS.

Jew Boy. Simon Blumenfeld. Jonathan Cape. pp. 348. 7s. 6d.

Conveyor. James Steele. Martin Lawrence. pp. 222. 7s. 6d.

THE first novel recounts how a young Jewish clothier fights his way into the revolutionary ranks. Many forces hold him back: he has to overcome the shock of finding his mother with her lover; he is tormented by unsatisfied sex; thrown out of work after leading a strike, he almost sinks in the despondency of unemployment; work in Soviet Russia seems the only way out of general despair. Then a Negro worker, leading the N.U.W.M., makes him realise that "all over the world men must be marching. . . . This was something to live for even here!"

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tailor's shop to the intellectuals' café, have a direct life.

The book is particularly remarkable because the reader receives warm, full sense, with broad humour of Jewish life. While its Jewish character, particularly as felt by a Catholic servant-girl, is intense, the unreality of all barriers is shown not only by the unity of the workers, Jews and Gentiles, but also culturally through Alec's love of music, the old Hebrew melodies and the fugues of Bach. For this reason the book has political importance in the fight against Fascism: Jews and Gentiles are distinct in character, but socially and culturally they can unite.

The use of music deserves still further mention. Though the actual music is not often described, it sounds through the whole book. This increases the sensuous pleasure of the novel, and makes revolution a fight for music also.

One point of criticism, however, is a certain looseness of structure. The novel tends to become a series of episodes. There is a long description of how a character succeeds in getting across the Canadian border; it is well told, but irrelevant, since the character hardly appears again. Similarly, when the angle of narration shifts from Alec to the thoughts of a secondary character, it sometimes stays too long there.

This makes the end not altogether satisfactory. There have been so many episodes, there is so much to be drawn into the final close, that there should be a firmer, longer stress on the scene where Alec realises where his place is, especially as the preparation of that knowledge is itself episodic rather than steadily sustained throughout. As a result the end comes with a somewhat disconcerting bump. But the novel remains important, artistically and politically.

The Conveyor, by James Steele, also shows a worker who learns to fight. Here the industrial unit is not the small shop, but the automobile factories in Detroit. The huge production machine is being speeded-up. The men work to its relentless rhythm with the water pouring off them; and still the foremen shout at them to "step on it." In the frantic speed nerves are strained until they break.

The book shows the causes and the consequences. Capitalism is scrapping men for profits. The worker's security of job, bank-balance, house on the instalment system, peaceful evenings in the little garden, a show with his wife—all goes. While he tramps his feet sore for work, house and furniture have to be turned into bread, and one capitalist after another takes his plunder from the sale. Love of husband and wife changes to nagging, drunkenness, hate and dirt; the healthy child sickens and can't be fed. Speed-up, unemployment, misery—nothing and nobody escapes.

There is seething revolt everywhere, violent rage that flares up in attacks on the foremen in the factories, rushes on the bludgeoning police by the unemployed, a vast force of revolutionary energy potentially far stronger than its enemies—but unorganised.

The great achievement of this book is that it shows with unrelaxing intensity that Jim Brogan must necessarily join a union. There is no hiding of the enemy's strength, no minimising of the means the capitalists have and use to break the workers in the factory, in the home and on the streets. But stronger still is shown the energy of their revolt; and revolt, facing such an enemy, must organise. And so Jim Brogan, who helped to smash the Reds while he was still hoping for his garden, comes into the Auto Workers' Union. House and home are gone; but he is with his class.

The uncompromising power with which Jim's individual development is shown as a living part of the class war makes this an outstanding piece of work. It is the novel of "Men and Motors."

ALICK WEST.

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A Warning on Finance

JUST over £5 this month has been contributed to the Debt Fund. Frankly in view of the rising circulation the LABOUR MONTHLY considers that this really does not reflect the interest taken in the magazine or the degree of importance which readers must attach to the question of its continuance.

If the MONTHLY'S appeal only results in the next few months in this relatively small though brave little list, the Editorial Board will have seriously to reconsider the whole question of publication, something which we all must feel would be a very serious matter in view of the present situation, which requires more than ever before the utmost clarification of its complexities.

Let us restate the bare bones of the position which forces the MONTHLY to continue making this appeal, for the benefit of readers who do not yet know it.

The MONTHLY owing to a lack of sufficient capitalist subsidies, *e.g.*, of the advertisement type is every month compelled to print at a loss of some £28. A heroic band of guarantors has hitherto filled part of this gap by together regularly contributing some £20 a month. Since this appeal was first launched some of them are in danger of dropping away. Even apart from this danger the MONTHLY has still the job of finding the difference that exists between this guarantor fund and the £28 monthly deficit as well as to help to liquidate the past accumulated debt of some £480. Accordingly the appeal for the Debt Fund was simultaneously launched as the one for the Guarantee.

Some readers last month may have thought that in announcing a record print for all time and also the selling out of the January issue that the MONTHLY was now on the threshold of being able to pay its way. Unfortunately this is not yet the case. Circulation must still be considerably increased before this can happen.

Meanwhile we hope that all readers will realise that until this takes place and so that the MONTHLY'S efforts for further sales increases will not be hindered, it is more than ever necessary to support the two funds.

Fill in, therefore, either of the forms that will be found overleaf, send us forward immediately what you are able.

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				P. Barnes, New Zealand ..	0	7	0
				Halfpenny Fund per N...	0	3	6
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In addition a contribution have been received for the Guarantee Fund of 2s. from Finsbury Park. The total of this Fund being still £20 5s. 10d.

*This is part of a total of 10/- that came in from this source, only 3/- having been acknowledged in error last month under the heading of "Anon, Cambridge."

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